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IN THIS ISSUE

NEWS: Patong porn peddlers pinched; Jungceylon white knight unmasked.

Pages 2, 3 & 7

INSIDE STORY: Tourism health check.

Pages 4 & 5

AROUND THE ISLAND: Moving house.

Page 8

AROUND THE REGION: Water pollution crackdown.

Page 10

PEOPLE: The marine biologist who cannot desert gobies.

Pages 12 & 13

LIFESTYLE: Loud and proud in Patong.

Pages 14 & 15

MOTORING: Jeep and cheerful diesel.

Page 18

GOOD LIVING: Dr Atkins and The Green Man.

Page 19

FIRST PERSON: Keeping Phuket on the map.

Page 25

BUSINESS & MONEY TALKS: Phuket-Haad Yai flights; Bear market.

Pages 30 & 31

SPORT & LEISURE: Tee Time with David Holloway; Cricket League; Rebek Champagne runs dry; Soft tennis; Women's basketball.

Pages 32 & 33

PROPERTY: Gardening; Doven; Home of the Week; Kathu; Construction; Thiwa Ratri.

Pages 34-37

PLUS

WEDDINGS, QUEER NEWS 6; AROUND THE NATION 11; HAPPENINGS 16; PHUKET DIARY 17; THAILAND TRAVELER 20; TAKE A BREAK 21 & 22; THE TIME MACHINE, HOROSCOPES 23; EDITORIAL, LETTERS 24; ISSUES & ANSWERS 25; TOWNINGS, BOOKS 26; OUTSIDE IN 27; COMPUTERS 28; ON THE MOVE 30; CLASSIFIEDS 38-48.

FREE AT LAST!

Visa runners released after four nights of fear

By Gazette Staff

RANONG: "The Ranong 12", a group of 12 foreign tourists arrested on the morning of February 8 for overstaying their visas, were finally set free on the morning of Sunday, February 12.

During their five-day ordeal they were forced to spend two nights trying to sleep on dirty police cell floors and two more nights locked up on buses during overnight journeys to and from Bangkok, where they were sent to be processed for deportation.

Among the detainees, who included British, South Korean, German, Vietnamese, French, Italian and Swedish nationals, the maximum overstay was just six days.

The detainees were eventually spared deportation from Bangkok following successful negotiations between their embassies and top Immigration officials in the capital. They were then returned, still under detention, to Ranong, from where they were finally allowed to depart the country under expulsion orders.

They then re-entered the country as free men and women on new tourist visas.

Here's a diary of what happened:

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY. The nightmare started when a team of six Highway Police and Tourist Police officers waved over the well-known "Big Bus", an air-conditioned double-decker bus that makes daily "visa runs" to Ranong.

The bus had reached Kapoe District, just 40 kilometers from the Ranong Immigration office, when it was pulled over and its passengers checked for visas and permit-to-stay stamps.



Chris Taylor with Benjamaporn Munsa, partner in Penphet Visa Run Co, on whose bus the Ranong 12 were traveling when arrested.

The 12 passengers who had overstayed were then separated from the other 26 passengers on board, who were allowed to continue on their visa run.

The 12 were forced to squat in the back of a police truck, and taken through the mid-day heat with sirens blaring to the Immigration office in Ranong. There, the group spent an hour in the parking lot before being returned to Kapoe, where they were locked up together in a single Kapoe District Police Station cell to await a hearing at the Ranong Provincial Courthouse.

DAY 2: THURSDAY. Jutarat

Payonchart, an employee of Phenpet Co Ltd, which runs the visa run service, informed the *Gazette* of the arrest. Speaking from the Ranong courthouse in the afternoon, she said she felt police had overreacted in incarcerating the visa runners.

"Why did they have to keep them overnight in a cell? These aren't illegal aliens trying to hide out in the country," she said.

Speaking from his prison cell, one of the detainees, 31-year-old Australian Chris Taylor told the *Gazette*: "On Tuesday I went to [Phuket] Immigration and said, 'This is the last day of my visa, it expires tomorrow,

what should I do?' and they said, 'Do a visa run tomorrow and pay a 200-baht overstay [fine].'

"That's exactly what I [was doing], but then we get pulled over by the Tourist Police and Highway Police and they make a huge problem for us," he said.

Justifying the arrests, Pol Maj Songproad Sirikul, the new head of the Ranong Tourist Police, told the *Gazette* that his office had received a report that a business was assisting illegal aliens by bringing them to Burma. He said he ordered his men to check into this and, when they did, it turned out to be true.

"The police arrested them because they broke the law," he said, while strenuously denying allegations that the arresting officers asked for 5,000 baht from each tourist in exchange for letting them go.

"I think that's impossible. I can guarantee that Tourist Police officers did not ask for money because we are not in trouble [financially] and I constantly remind them to not do that."

The group spent the night trying to sleep on the floor in a cell at the Ranong Muang District Police Station.

DAY 3: FRIDAY. The *Gazette* again contacts Chris Taylor, who is still in custody and has just learned he is to be deported.

"I can't believe what has happened. They want to send us to the Bangkok Detention Center, from where they will deport us to our home countries - all because of a one-day overstay [in my case]."

It was our second night sleeping on the dirty floor, with mosquitoes. I am black and brown from dirt."

Continued on page 2

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Free after four nights of fear

From page 1

He said the group members had been led to believe they would be released after paying 1,000-baht fines at Ranong Court. That didn't happen.

"The public prosecutor told us that if we just admitted to the Court what we did and paid a 1,000-baht fine, they would let us go to Immigration and we could complete our visa trip. We paid, but when we got to Immigration they fingerprinted us and said, 'You're being deported - immediately'."

The Australian said he felt betrayed. "We sent money for the tsunami problem. We like the Thai people and want to visit - and then we got s**t on. We are part of one of their tours, where everyone makes money. We spend money in Phuket, we want to stay here. It's good for the economy, good for everyone. And now we are just being s**t on."

"We've been treated like animals, sleeping on the ground. I've never been locked up before in all my life. It's absolutely disgusting. You cannot trust the Tourist Police anymore. They are supposed to be on our side, helping us. But now they have gone against us and made a big problem for us."

Pol Capt Weerachai Phugkesorn of the Ranong Immigration Office told the *Gazette*, "It's true that if people arrive at our office and have overstayed their visas we just fine them 200 baht per day of overstay. But it was [another police division] that arrested them, not us. If they hadn't been arrested, we would have just fined them as usual."

"The case went to court, where the judge rendered a decision. They were sent to us by the police and we are just following the provisions of the Immigra-



Ranong Police barred photography in their cells, but this grab from a video, taken clandestinely, shows the Ranong 12 being visited by friends.

tion Act by transferring them to Bangkok for deportation," Capt Weerachai said.

After being kept in the cell for most of the day, in the evening the 12 were locked into two minibuses supplied by Penphet Visa Run Co for the long overnight journey to the Immigration Detention Center in Bangkok. Although exhausted, most find it impossible to sleep.

DAY 4: SATURDAY. The detainees arrive at the Immigration Detention Center, where they spend much of the day in cells, desperately trying to contact their embassies.

Many have still been unable to sleep and find the food they are given inedible.

At about 11 pm, they are again locked up in the minibuses and begin the overnight return journey to Ranong. They will not be deported from Bangkok after all, but from Ranong.

DAY 5: SUNDAY. The buses return to Ranong Immigration, from where the detainees are finally put on a boat and "deported" to Burma around 9 am. After crossing over to Victoria Point (Kaw Thuang) and getting their entry and exits stamps, they return to Ranong Immigration, where they are issued new visas.

On February 14, Janpen Munsu, partner in the Penphet Visa Run Co, told the *Gazette* that the arrests were unprecedented in the company's six-year history and had hurt her business, as former customers now feared arrest if they used it.

"The company is registered as a visa run business, but they arrested [our customers] - using rude words and bad behavior," she said, adding that hers is just one of three companies providing the service.

"Why was our vehicle pulled over and our overstayed customers singled out for prosecution?" she asked.

Anchalee Praphut, owner of Angelina Travel and Tour Agency, who arranged the visa tour for one of the overstays, said the whole episode had sullied the reputation for the Tourist Police - adding that they had to plead with the police to allow two of the group who were diabetic to be given insulin shots, which they had to pay for themselves.

Ranong Governor Mekin Methawikul, who was informed of the issue by K. Anchalee, told the *Gazette* that he had sent a formal request to the head of the Ranong Tourist Police for a report about the incident.

He said that the Tourist Police Chief told him that there had been cases of foreigners using the visa runs to smuggle *ya bah* (methamphetamine) into the country from Burma, so his staff needed to check foreigners on visa runs carefully.

As Tourist Police do not have the authority to stop moving vehicles, they called on the Highway Police for assistance.

Another bus on a visa run that followed shortly thereafter was allowed to pass by because police did not want to create traffic congestion, the Governor quoted Maj Songproad as saying.

The Governor added that, as the arresting officers were low-level police, it was unrealistic to expect them to be able to communicate well in English.

"It should be the tour company staff who speak English who should have explained to the tourists about what was going on," he said.

"I admit this type of thing has never before happened in Ranong and I have told the Tourist Police to prevent this kind of thing from happening [again]. Still, I think the officers did their jobs according to procedure," he said. **Editorial: page 24.**

Patong porn peddlers pinched

PATONG: An undercover team from Kathu Police Station led by Pol Maj Serm Kwannimitra raided two VCD outlets opposite the Patong Tourist Police office on Thaweewong Rd.

They arrested two people and confiscated some 5,000 obscene VCDs.

The alleged offenders were Nattaporn Sornram, 33, and Jirawit Nonthapanthawat, also 33, both Phuket natives.

They were found to be in possession of 2,000 and 3,000 VCDs respectively. Both were nabbed while selling their wares to foreign tourists.

Police said that the offenders both confessed that they had sold risqué movies for years, adding that foreign tourists made up the largest part of their clientele.

They were charged with possession of obscene material with intent to sell.

Well-known Phuket figure dies aged 76

PHUKET CITY: Well-known Phuket figure Pracha Tantawanij died on February 6 in Vachira Phuket Hospital after a short illness. He was 76 years old. A funeral was conducted on February 12 at Wat Kosit Wiharn in Phuket City.

K. Pracha was born on September 27, 1929, one of seven children of Yuae and Lucy Tantawanij, in the Chinpracha Mansion on Krabi Rd, the house where he lived his entire life.

He made his money from tin mining, but in recent decades was known in Phuket chiefly for his collection of antiques, which were on display in the Chinpracha Mansion, a classic Sino-Portuguese home.

He welcomed into his home anyone interested in learning about the history and culture of Thai-Chinese people in southern Thailand. The house itself has also served as a place to learn about Sino-Portuguese building techniques and the preservation of antiquities.

K. Pracha is survived by his wife Jaronrad "Daeng" Tantawanij and two sons, Prajak and Khanaj.

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Promthep wind power project stalled

LAEM PROMTHERP: A ban on structures taller than eight meters at Laem Promthep, Phuket's premier sunset tourist attraction, has stalled construction of three 50m-tall wind turbines, each to cost 40 million baht.

Ong-ad Thanachanmongkol, Chief of the Phuket office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, said recently that he must first obtain the go-ahead for the project from his superiors in Bangkok.

"The area where Egat [Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand] wants to build the new wind turbines is zoned, with buildings restricted to no more than eight meters in height," he said.

Thanat Kunaruk, Chief of the Wind & Solar Development Department at Egat's Alternative Energy Development Division, told the *Gazette*, "Egat has been studying the effectiveness of wind turbines at Laem Promthep for a long time. This site has strong winds; it is very suitable for wind turbines."

He added that the Rawai Tambon Administration Organization (*OrBorTor*) was willing to approve the construction of the towers, but only if the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the project is approved.

"Each wind turbine uses land area of only 10m by 10m. It's a small space; it's not [the same as] a building, it's the same as a power pylon," he said.

K. Thanat explained that Egat filed the EIA for the project at the end of January. "If the province does not approve [the installation of the turbines at]



The big windmill above Nai Harn Beach is already a familiar landmark in Phuket. Now Egat wants to add three more twice as tall.

Laem Promthep, we will need to find another suitable location in another province to go ahead with this project."

Annai Yosawasuwit, an electrical engineer at Egat's Promthep Alternative Energy Development Station, explained that the new turbines will each have the capacity to produce 750 kw of power per hour.

He added that the existing 24-meter wind turbine, which contributes to Phuket's main grid, and the smaller turbines that power the Egat research station at the cape, were built before the 8m limit on buildings came into force.

Second printing of 'Guide' distributed

PHUKET: The second printing of the 2006 *Gazette Guide*, Phuket's English-language "Yellow Pages", is now on the shelves at bookshops, bakeries, coffee shops and other outlets around Phuket, Khao Lak and Krabi.

Guestroom copies have already been distributed to Phuket's leading hotels and resorts.

The new *Gazette Guide* has 3,115 listings in 465 pages – making it 11% larger than last year's *Guide*.

In total, 5,253 phone numbers, 2,558 email addresses and 1,772 websites are listed.

Following the tsunami, the Khao Lak and Phi Phi sections of the *Guide* have been completely rebuilt.

The price of the new *Gazette Guide* is unchanged from previous years, at 140 baht a copy.

It is available for purchase at the outlets listed in the *Gazette* website at www.phuketgazette.net/guide/vendors2006

Bulk orders of the directory (for guesthouses, clubs, associations, etc) are available at discounts. Delivery of orders of 10 or more copies is free of charge. Email guide@phuketgazette.net for details.

Moves to make Patong Beach 'more orderly'

PATONG: Vice-Governor Worapot Rattasima has been appointed chairman of a committee charged with cleaning up Patong Beach and ensuring that beach operators are regulated.

Committee member and Patong Municipality Chief Administrative Officer Poonsak Naksena said that the known 55 renters of beach chairs and umbrellas have until by February 24 to tidy up the layout of their 2,300-odd umbrellas and beach chairs so that the beach can be cleared of people quickly in case of another tsunami.

In addition, by February 24, each beach chair and umbrella renter, as well as every masseuse working on the beach, must register with Patong Municipality and obtain a license.

Patong Municipality will allocate a zone for each to operate within. The license will have to be renewed each year.

Kathu Police Superintendent Pol Lt Col Teeraphol Thipjaroen said, "We have been having difficulty controlling the problems at Patong Beach because we cannot continually check the beach, and the operators move back each time after we check."

Col Teeraphol added, "We should also register and limit the number of tuk-tuk drivers in Patong and give them uniforms. Furthermore, I could lecture the drivers on ethical behavior."

Jungceylon white knight unmasked

By Anongnat Sartpisut

PHUKET CITY: The mystery white knight who has ridden to the rescue of the Jungceylon project was revealed on February 9 as Real Estate Capital Asia Partners (Recap), a private real estate investment fund owned by US and Singaporean interests.

Recap is a Cayman Islands-registered 50:50 joint venture between the Baupost Group of Boston, Massachusetts, and Singapore's City Developments Ltd.

It was set up in 2004 with capital of US\$220 million (8.8 billion baht) to make "investments in real estate-related assets, portfolios and companies in selected markets in Asia".

Recap was an investor in the 2003 revival of the former Sofitel Riverside Hotel, a victim of the 1997 Asian economic crisis. The 32-floor, 550-room hotel reopened late last year as the Millennium Hilton Hotel.

The identity of the investor was revealed at a media conference called by Phuket Provincial Court Chief Judge Samrarn Yothayai, who has led months of mediation to break the deadlock that halted the project.

Tanit Rattana-Kamchai, one of the two original major partners in Jungceylon, confirmed

that the project will get going again now that the other major partner, Manit Udomkunnatum, has sold his 53% share in Jungceylon's operating company, Phuket Square Co.

He declined to say how much of his share K. Manit had sold to Recap, and how much to other investors, but did reveal that the "leading administrator" of the board of Phuket Square will be MR Chatumongkol Sonakul, a former Governor of the Bank of Thailand.

K. Tanit said that construction of Jungceylon is 80% complete and discussions have already reopened with the main contractor, Powerline, with the aim of having the mega-mall open by November this year.

K. Tanit's legal adviser, Sompob Wongchalor, said that 80% of the units in Jungceylon had been booked by tenants. He

had had discussed the future with "20 to 30" of these, and all still want to move in. Their only concern was when they could do so.

He added that Jungceylon is currently valued at 2.9 billion baht, and that a further 1.1 billion baht will be needed to complete the project, making a total of 4 billion baht.

K. Sompob said that the mediation to resolve the Jungceylon deadlock had taken a long time not because the dispute between the partners was difficult to resolve, but because there were many small details to iron out in order to protect the interests of tenants.

K. Tanit thanked Judge Samrarn. "The mediator needs to understand both sides, and to be very patient," he said. Because of Judge Samrarn and his colleagues, he added, Jungceylon would soon be back on track."

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Neil Cumming, Managing Director of Asia Web Direct Co and its online hotel booking service Phuket.Com, says that for the limited market segment his service caters to – fully independent travelers (FITs) – business continues to grow.

Asked about advanced booking for the remainder of February through till May, he prefaced his comments by saying, “Our figures reflect a relatively small part of the overall Phuket tourist market. We promote around 200 or so hotels and only produce a very small percentage of their occupancy. All we can see is that our market is growing at around a 40% [annual rate].”

Booking trends by national groups have not changed significantly at Phuket.Com, which continues to target Europeans and Australians, prosperous couples from Southeast Asia and expats based in the region. All of these groups are booking over the Internet in much bigger numbers than before, he said.

“We think we will see around a 75% year-on-year increase for that period compared with 2005, and a 40% to 50% increase compared with 2004,” he said.

Mr Cumming does not see the cancelation of so many direct flights to Phuket as a major bar-

The months to come:

Most players in Phuket’s tourism industry are pleased with the island’s post-tsunami recovery, particularly the return to near-normal hotel occupancy rates this high season. Despite this performance, there have been rumors that bookings figures for the upcoming months are not looking quite so healthy. Here, some leading players in the industry speak with *Gazette* writers about current trends – and what they expect in the months to come.

rier to growth in his market segment.

“It’s no problem ... our regional visitors have even more selection with Tiger, AirAsia and other low-cost carriers. Europeans traveling FIT usually go via Bangkok or Singapore. Australians are usually passing through on the way to Europe, so they stopover en-route from the same two hubs,” he said.

One trend he has noticed is that more travelers are waiting until the last minute to book – a fact Asia Web Direct has taken advantage of with its second hotel booking site, Latestays.Com

“Booking on that site is run-

ning at more than 100% up on 2004; our lead-time for normal advance bookings is averaging less than three weeks.

“Secondly, special offers are attracting nearly all the business. Those properties that are maintaining original rates and waiting for business to return are still waiting. Finally, whenever a property that normally quotes “+++” rates, [partial rates that don’t include taxes and service charges] also makes an offer quoted in net rates [ie: inclusive of all taxes and service charges], the latter outsells the former by three to one. I think that this is partly due to the fact that there are scores of

websites selling Phuket hotels and all of them, except us, quote net rates, so the Internet booker is being exposed to open and straightforward deals rather than rates with hidden charges added on later,” he said.

Mr Cumming was proud of his company’s efforts in restoring confidence in the tsunami-affected region.

“Many hundreds of viewers wrote heart-warming messages of support, often requesting additional shots of specific areas, people and properties – and all promising to return. Over 4,000 images make up our tsunami gallery now and showcase the courage, efforts, hope and eventual triumph of the people of Phuket. They also clearly illustrate our message that ‘Phuket is better than ever!’

“Moving on, in partnership with local hotels, we have vigorously promoted special offers, publicized re-openings... and lifted our ‘destination’ marketing efforts to unprecedented efforts. We first saw a turnaround as early as May and are now seeing increases of more than 40%, year-on-year. We are proud to say that 2005 was our most successful year.

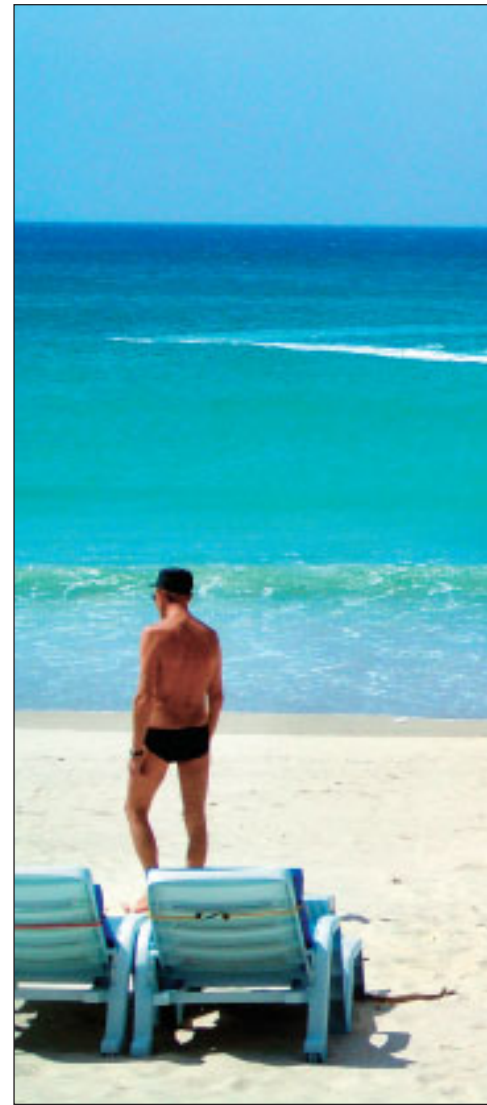
“In practice, the work we did last year produced great results and we see no sign of that diminishing. Indeed, the increase shows every sign of continuing,” he said.

Phuket International Airport (PIA) Director Sq Ldr Pornchai Eua-aree told the *Gazette* there was a 100% increase in the number of flights during the Chinese New Year period in 2006, compared with 2005.

“While that’s still down 11% compared with the Chinese New Year in 2004, it’s still a good performance,” he said.

An increase in charter flights was offsetting losses related to the axing of scheduled flights, he said.

“We are happy that there has been an increase in the number of charter flights from Europe, especially Scandinavia – which is sending more boarding students here than ever. We have also been seeing an increase in the number of charter flights from



Hong Kong and [South] Korea since October 2005,” he said.

Sq/Ldr Pornchai said the increase in charter flights painted a optimistic picture for the future, “So long as all stakeholders participate in maintaining Phuket as a high-quality destination.”

Wolfgang Meusburger, GM of the Holiday Inn Resort in Patong, said that he expects – based on current bookings – occupancy of 85% in February, with a dip to 70% in March before climbing to 80% in April.

“If we look at the current booking trend, the situation is like this: most travel agencies book very late... before, people made bookings six to seven months before they arrived. Now people book only a week or two in advance,” he said.

“But Holiday Inn is quite satisfied with our business; it’s much better than we thought. What we see is that most of our customers have been here be-



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a health check for tourism



Patong Beach could hardly be described as 'jammed with people', but things could be a lot worse.

fore. They are all coming back, so we had a very good January, with occupancy at over 90%," he said.

"Anything is better than 2005. It's a little bit less than 2004, but we can't expect business to come back 100% so soon after the tsunami. Still, we are very satisfied; it is much better than we expected," he said, adding that Europe and Australia remained the hotel's main source of guests.

"We have some Asian guests, but this segment is slower ... a part of the problem may be that they have been having difficulty finding flights," he said.

Despite Phuket's revival, security issues continue to be a concern, he said.

"Big international compa-

nies are still worried about the situation in the [Deep] South; there are travel warnings saying that Phuket might be a target.

Let's say you're a big company, like American Express or DHL. If there is an official travel advisory [on a US government website] they will not risk sending tourists to Phuket, because if something happens they will be held responsible. Such travel warnings are very negative.

"But I think the second big problem is the flights situation. Many people want to come, but there are not enough flights available.

"I think the hotel industry was quite angry when Thai Airways said it was canceling its Sydney-Melbourne-Phuket ser-

vice. We also used to have direct flights from Japan; they are not back and we have no direct flights from Hong Kong. We all feel the national carrier should be doing more to promote Phuket."

"Our business from Hong Kong is down by about 80%. Having to fly here via Bangkok or Singapore increases travel time from three hours to six or seven, causing many Hong Kong residents to choose another destination to which they can fly to direct.

"If we still had direct flights, I think business from Hong Kong would be back to about 80% of the pre-tsunami rates, but now it is only about 20%. The Australian market is less of a problem because a lot of people can still

fly to Singapore or to Bangkok. So, it really depends on each market," he said.

Equally varied are the performances of individual hotels in Phuket, he said.

"I think if you talk to 10 hotel managers, you will hear some hotel managers, like me, saying that they are very happy. But you will also hear some hotel managers who says business is very, very bad. At the moment, I think hotels that have been here for many years and have established long-term relationships with travel agencies are doing better. But if you open a completely new hotel this winter, I think it will be very, very hard," he concluded.

Siripakorn Cheawsamoot, Assistant Director of TAT's Region 4 Office in Phuket, said booking information he had received for April looked good, especially from Europe, Australia and Russia.

"Currently [South] Korea is a major source of tourists with both direct and charter flights available, though the number of arrivals was expected to tail off after the number of flights decreases in March," he said.

He added that hotel occupancy in mid-February averaged at about 80% across the island, and the TAT plans to attract incentive groups from India and the Middle East during the "green season" that starts May 1.

Phuket Tourist Association President Pattanapong Aikwanich described the February-April outlook as "so-so", with

the number of European arrivals expected to taper off after March as spring arrives on that continent.

Advanced booking figures are less reliable now because, with 35,000 rooms to fill, tourists are less worried about finding a room and are not booking as far in advance, he said.

"I hope that from the start of the school break in mid-March, we will see more Thai tourists coming to Phuket - we plan to work together with tourism businesses to come up with packages that will attract them," he said.

Phuket offers better value-for-money on hotels in the 1,000-baht-per-night-and-under range than Chiang Mai, Pattaya or Samui, he added.

He noted that he expects overall occupancy in 2006 to be about 60%, down from about 70% before the tsunami. Peak high-season occupancy rates this year were also down slightly from the 90% average before the tsunami, he added.

"Low season this year will probably be lower than in the past, because we have been left with just the domestic market and some regional markets, like [South] Korea and Singapore after the cut in direct flights by THAI." (See also *First Person*, page 25.)

K. Pattanapong noted that in addition to a drop in arrivals, global economic trends had resulted in many tourists taking shorter holidays and spending less when they do travel.

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Happily Ever After

Recent weddings in Phuket



Yumiko Toda and Junya Toda from Japan celebrated their wedding at the Laguna Wedding Chapel, Cherng Talay, on February 6.



Wannee Saengworn and Pantirat Nongwatwere married in Phra Pitak Grand Ballroom at The Metropole hotel, Phuket City, on January 22

Queer News

Growing pains in the B30 medical scheme

PRACHIN BURI: Admirers of the government's 30-baht medical scheme may wish to consider, after reading the following, whether reform is necessary.

Prachinburi resident Chaluy Pantam, 37, has watched with increasing alarm over the last two years as a ping pong ball-sized lump on his right shoulder grew into a Quasimodo-like hump "weighing more than 20 kilograms."

In the meantime, the former milk deliveryman — who lives with his live-in girlfriend, Mantana Pensuri, 49, in a tin shack in Tambon Koolampan — has become nearly incapacitated.

"It's a terrible impediment," he said, "I can no longer work because it's impossible to stand up for more than 15 minutes. The pain is such that I have to take 10 tablets of paracetamol a day."

To take up the slack, K. Mantana, 49, has taken over the daily milk runs. "I earn 120 baht a day," she explained. "It's scarcely enough to pay for hospital expenses each day. Over the past two years we've had to sell everything to pay for treatment. Now we're destitute."

What kind of treatment has K. Chaluy received? According to the couple, they have been to hospitals in Prachin Buri, Chon Buri and Bangkok — all to no avail.

"No doctor has been able to answer the question, 'What is this strange growth on my shoulder

and how can it be treated?'" said K. Chaluy.

The hump has grown ominously and quickly: it is 60 centimeters long — from his shoulder to his waist — and is 40 cm round.

"It's the size of a soccer ball," noted a reporter from the vernacular newspaper, *Kom Chad Luek*.

K. Mantana's desperate written appeals for help, to the newspaper and to TV show *BaanLekTiHa*, finally brought the couple's plight to public notice.

"I just want the relevant government agency, or perhaps some good-hearted person, to help with the cost of treatments," she explained.

A doctor at the prestigious Chulalongkorn medical center was familiar with Chaluy's case: "He came in for treatment and a sample was excised for analysis," a newspaper reporter was told upon inquiry, "but K. Chaluy refused to undergo surgery — why, we don't know."

"But if he'd like to begin treatment anew, Chulalongkorn Hospital is happy to accept him; he's an old patient of ours. However, the condition is now too far gone to treat with surgery."

The issue of how it *will* be treated was not addressed — but, whatever happens, K. Chaluy will probably face it with equanimity; his name means "species of graceful meditators."

Source: *Kom Chad Luek*

WARNING: SELLING ALCOHOL TO PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS OLD IS ILLEGAL

*When the taste is perfect,
it can be the start of a friendship.*





Students head uphill to safety during the Kamala tsunami drill.

Kamala school tries out tsunami evacuation plan

KAMALA: The Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) is setting up community evacuation plans in eight provinces of Thailand to prevent loss of life in case of future tsunamis.

The ADPC launched its project with the evacuation of some 415 students during a tsunami drill at Racha Prachanukro 36 School (formerly Baan Kamala School) on February 3.

Dr Bhichit Rattakul, Senior Adviser of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), said, "This is an opportunity for the Kamala community, Racha Prachanukro 36 School and Kamala OrBorTor [Tambon Administration Organization] to work together, especially when evacuating the area.

"The school has its own evacuation plan. At first, students will be moved to a location in front of the school. After that, the community will help to evacuate them, providing first aid and giving instructions, while the police will control traffic."

School Director Preecha Puenrak explained that initially the school will have one drill per semester – or twice a year. "How often we have evacuation drills will depend on factors such as the frequency and severity of earth-

quakes [in the region]. The more frequent or the more severe they are, the more often we will have drills," he explained.

However, Dr Bhichit had reservations about whether an evacuation would run as smoothly as the drill if the tsunami alarm sounded a genuine warning. "We don't know if police response time would be quick enough in the case of a real tsunami. Today was just a drill and people had warning that the evacuation would take place," he said.

That said, similar evacuation plans are to be set up in Phang Nga, Krabi, Ranong, Satun, Trang, Surat Thani and Nakhon Sri Thammarat, he explained.

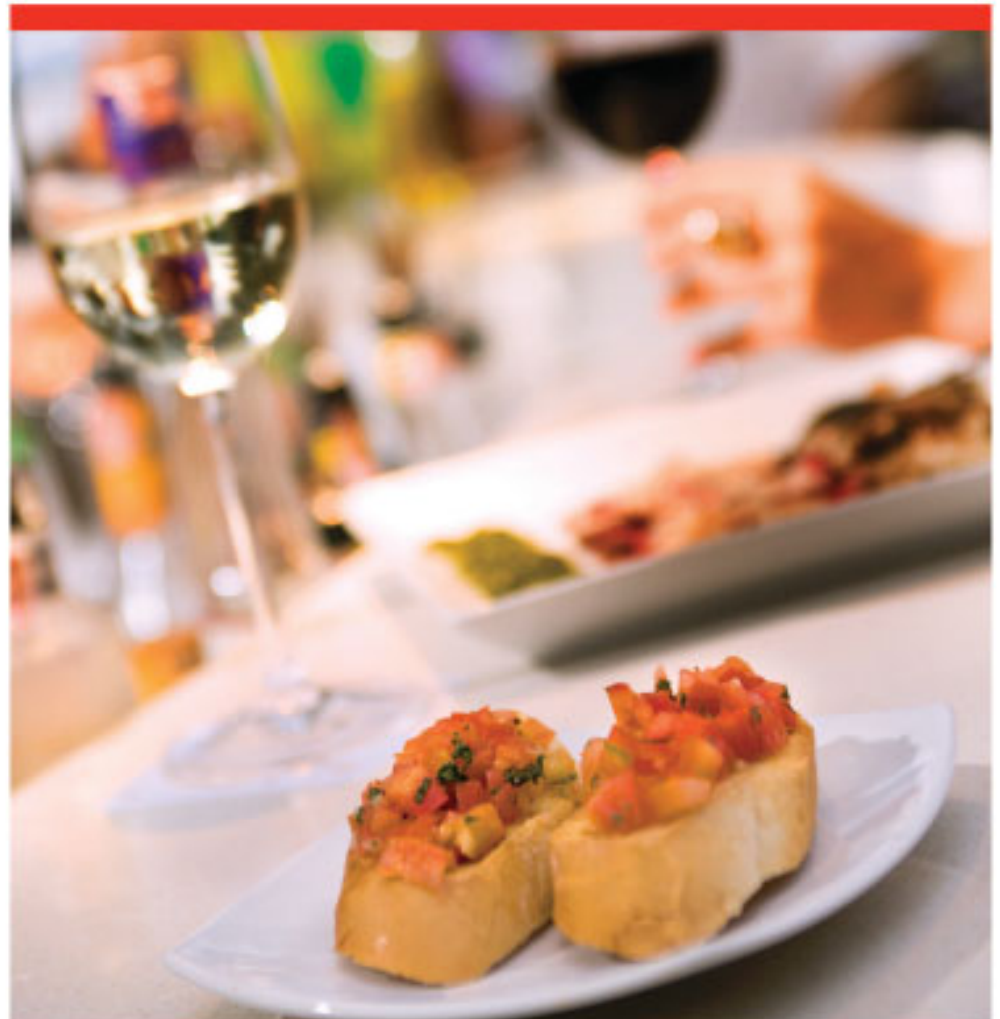
"We don't want evacuation plans to be set up by the government alone, because if the villagers have no part in setting up the plan it will not last long. But this time the villagers drew the map themselves and made the plan themselves. And as they are the 'owners' of this plan, it will remain in their minds," he said.

Dr Bhichit added that the Phuket Provincial office of the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation will be responsible for ensuring tsunami evacuation drills are held in the future.



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Here's a riddle for you: What takes seven days to go up but only three to come down? The answer is what's known in the building trade as a "relocatable modular building", more commonly known as a prefab.

Relocatable homes are popular in Australia and New Zealand, where some families have to keep moving from place to place. For those people, having a house that can actually go with them is a valuable asset.

The concept couldn't be simpler; dense polyester-filled galvanized steel panels slot into frames and are then clipped together with windows, doors and fittings slotting in later. And, of course, the process can be reversed if need be. Because the panels are insulated, the resulting house is easy to keep cool.

But what does this mean for Phuket? At Safeway, opposite Wat Chalong on Chao Fa West Rd, Scot-turned-Aussie Gordon Adamson has a construction and storage company on the old Thunderbird Garage site, from which he has been supplying relocatable cabins and offices, and mobile toilets for construction sites.

Mobile toilets for construction sites? Don't construction workers simply head for the nearest bushes? "Construction has gone upmarket," smiles Gordon. "Developers like to do things properly and want on-site toilets."

So what are the advantages of relocatable homes, Gordon's latest venture? Well, the design is flexible enough to allow it to be tailored to meet customers' needs, the homes are easily assembled and disassembled, they are termite-proof and fire-retardant, no heavy digging or lifting equipment is required and they are almost maintenance-free.

Relocatables can be used as shops, medical units, classrooms, on-site sales offices, assembly halls, art studios – you name it.

The home that gives that extra mobility



Gordon Adamson with one of the 'relocatable' homes at the Safeway yard near Wat Chalong.

And here's the big advantage: they're great value for money. The 80-square-meter model – all the units available at Safeway are manufactured lo-

cally to Australian standards – can be yours for about 570,000 baht – cheaper per square meter than the most basic Thai-style house.

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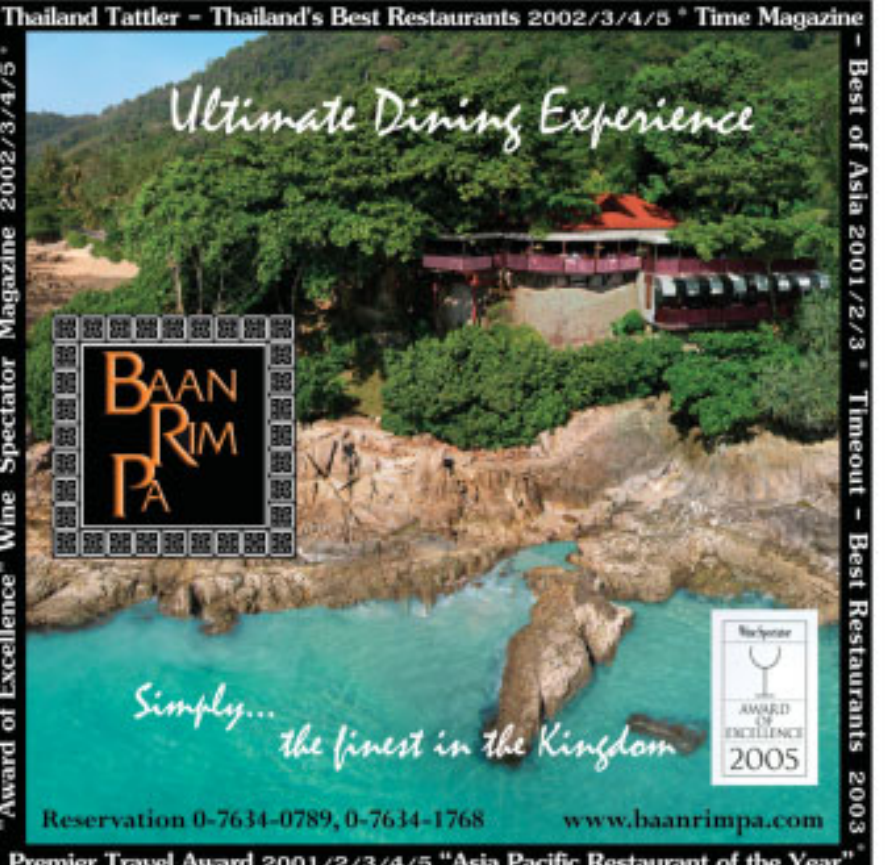
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FROM THE GULF OF THAILAND

By Barry Singleton

Sombat Somwang, head of the Samui Municipality Office's Servicing Unit – the department charged with monitoring industrial waste on the island – has announced that severe fines will be imposed on businesses that allow sewage or dirty water to run into the sea or onto public land.

His team will take samples from public areas and tests them in the lab for BOD (biological oxygen demand) levels.

The safe limit is 20 milligrams per liter of water, and fines on polluters will be levied on a rising scale in accordance with how much over the limit the pollution is, it was announced.

For example, where pollution levels are found to be twice the official limit, businesses will be fined up to 10,000 baht. If the waste levels are between two and four times the limit, the fine will up to 50,000 baht. Up to seven times the limit will incur a fine of up to 100,000 baht, while those companies that produce waste that reaches 10 times the official limit will face fines of up to 200,000 baht.

Pollution of freshwater and seawater is becoming a serious problem in and around Samui, where few hotels treat their wastewater effectively.

The recent introduction of sewage treatment plants in two places has helped the situation, but now the authorities want to make sure that companies use the facilities by disposing of their sewage and wastewater in a responsible way.



Police officers, under renowned Police Inspector Bunma Geawlaiyat, prepare to go grab some dealers.

Crackdown on water pollution announced

Coconut killing: Police on January 29 were called to a coconut plantation not far from Samui Airport where they discovered the body of Boonhiang Malichim, 45, who was found dead at the wheel of his car.

The victim had suffered a gunshot wound to the right temple, which killed him instantly. His wife, Mol Malichim, 40, was found lying unconscious next to the vehicle.

K. Mol later said that she had been checking harvested coconuts in the back of the vehicle while her husband was waiting in the cab when a man wearing jeans, a checked shirt, a black knitted hat and sunglasses rode up on a motorcycle.

The man called out that he

was lost, but when he reached their vehicle he attacked K. Mol and shot her husband before fleeing the scene.

A man was later caught by police in Chaweng in connection with the shooting, and found to be in possession of an unlicensed weapon and ammunition.

He denied killing K. Boonhiang, but police are keeping him in custody until K. Mol feels up to confronting him and, possibly, identifying him as her husband's murderer.

Power play: Samui's Mayor, Warakorn Ratanarak, has slammed those in charge of the island's power supply for failing to provide an adequate service.

According to officials, the

local Municipality Office has repeatedly requested a budget for the installation of an island-wide village power supply, but the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) – more accurately, the Electricity Generating Public Company Limited (EGCO), set up as the first independent power producer in Thailand, in 1992 – has never managed to go beyond the survey stage.

Up to 30 locations on Samui are still without a regular electricity supply, and repairs and upgrades to village-level services are infrequent.

K. Warakorn called on Samui's new District Chief to look into the power problem, adding that if the island is serious about improving its infrastructure

and local people's quality of life, the PEA will have to show more commitment to doing its job.

Loud protest: A recently completed 2-million-baht project to provide information via public address systems in villages around Koh Samui is running into problems because it clashes with tourists' expectations of what a tropical island paradise should sound like.

The village media service broadcasts daily news and public information through loudspeakers but resort owners in tourist hotspots like Chaweng have already complained that the noise disturbs their guests.

Village leaders in Baan Taling Ngam refused to install the loudspeakers, and the Municipality Office is now saying that the project will have to be monitored for the first few months in order to measure its value.

Grow up! Medical services continued to improve and expand on Koh Samui with the recent arrival of psychiatrist Dr Antika Klein at the Samui Bangkok Hospital.

Dr Klein is American-Thai, and therefore able to treat patients in both English and Thai. She is an expert in panic disorders and also provides general therapy.

Asked by a local magazine how she saw the island in terms of its psychological development, Dr Klein likened Samui to a rebellious teenager with delinquent tendencies.

She said it lacked self-control and valued freedom above responsibility, adding that the island was in need of "parental guidance".

Samui's "personality problems" should be dealt with now in order to avoid problems during "adulthood", she said.

Drug dealers held: At the end of last month, renowned Royal Thai Police Inspector Bunma Geawlaiyat arrived on Koh Samui with a team of specially trained officers to conduct undercover operations aimed at reducing the drug problem on the island.

The team arrested one heroin dealer and another man supposedly dealing in cannabis and amphetamines.

The first operation involved using one of the heroin dealer's customers, an addict known as "Anan", who was the bait in a fake drug deal set up by phone.

The police followed Anan to the dealer's house where they searched and arrested a known pusher, "Pratuang", for possession and sale of narcotics.

A small amount of heroin was found in the man's pockets, and a police sniffer dog later found larger quantities around the house, much of it packed into drinking straws ready for sale.

In another case, following a similar sting operation, Inspector Bunma and his team apprehended Go Seng Yuso in possession of 20 amphetamine pills and around 1.4 kilograms of marijuana.

The arrest was made after what was described as a "dramatic" escape and road chase.

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Teens can't get enough online porn

Research by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation and Assumption Business Administration College (Abac) revealed that most Thai Internet users start at the ages of 13-15, and that many young users access pornographic websites.

Thai Health Deputy Manager Krissada Ruangareerat said 44.8% of parents do not know what their children do when online.

The research, which polled 1,464 Internet users aged between 15 and 24, found 16% of the teen respondents drank and smoked while watching pornographic pictures online. Another 16% masturbated and 5% had sex.

Among the 85% who said they had used the Internet to chat with strangers. Of these, 28% said they talked about sex and 2% even dated strangers they met in cyberspace.

Sira Satji-janon, 19, of the Thai Webmasters Association, said he had found one girl who had sex chats with a person who eventually persuaded her to install a webcam to see her naked.

"Then the girl started earning money by showing her naked body over the webcam and finally became a sex worker," he said.

Strong leader: Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra expressed a willingness to hold a referendum to decide whether to rewrite the Constitution, but refused to succumb to pressure from advocacy groups.

"I am ready to amend the Constitution but will not do it in order to please two or three individuals who are dissatisfied with certain provisions," he said.

The Prime Minister said Thailand had amended its charter more frequently than its laws.



Skydivers from 31 countries form a world-record 400-person free-fall formation above Udon Thani. Forming the shape of a snowflake, the jump was organized in honor of the 60th anniversary of His Majesty the King's accession to the throne this year.

"Thai opinion makers are never satisfied with charter provisions," he said, lamenting that he came to power under existing provisions designed for strong leadership but was attacked for being a strong leader.

Out of luck: A special police unit stormed a row of 10 commercial buildings in Bangkok's Pratunam area and arrested 262 gamblers.

Metropolitan Police Commissioner Lt Gen Thavornsak Thepchatrri said he led 60 officers in a pre-dawn raid on the den, which reportedly belongs to a man named Paijit Thammarojpinit, known as "Hia Por Pratunam". Suspects were detained at the Crime Suppression Division.

During the raid, police seized 152 million baht worth of

gambling chips, 538,810 baht in cash, 1,000 decks of card, 200 dice, two slot machines, a safe deposit box, four surveillance cameras, five card-shuffling devices, Hi-Lo materials, one baccarat table, one banknote-counting device and nearly 100 mobile phones. Police also seized 46 cars after the raid.

"This is the biggest gambling bust since the Taopoon gambling raid last June, because this den has been around for a long time, has a lot of customers and deals in many millions of baht a day," said Thavornsak, adding that the raid took about a month to plan.

Week off: Fearing for their safety, teachers at 250 primary schools in Yala Province refused to go to work for one week fol-

lowing shooting attacks on five of their colleagues.

Yala Teachers Federation adviser Prasit Meksuwan said Education Ministry officials in Yala's Education Region 1 agreed to close all 250 primary schools for one week while the security situation is reassessed.

Four teachers at Baan Lue Mu school were ambushed while waiting for guards to escort them home. A fifth teacher was shot on his way home. All survived. Many teachers in the three southernmost provinces have sought transfers to other areas.

Snake in the gas: A snake caused a leak at a Trans Thai Malaysia Ltd (TTM) gas separation plant in Songkhla Province after it crawled into a liquefied

petroleum gas (LPG) pipeline, causing an electrical short-circuit, a company executive said.

The leakage occurred in Chana District, at a station of the Thai-Malay gas pipeline project, and caused a brief scare among motorists traveling along the Asia Highway.

Somchai Kooyai, Senior Executive Vice-President of TTM, said the accident did not cause severe damage to the LPG pipeline, but operations had been suspended so that a temporary system test could be conducted.

The accident did not affect the operations of the plant, he added.

Teacher tribulations: A new Education Ministry panel is considering two plans for employing teachers in line with the handover of some schools to local administrative bodies. The ministry's Permanent Secretary Khunying Kasama Varawarn na Ayutthaya said the panel will make a decision on February 27.

The first plan would allow the ministry to employ the teachers for three years, after which they would have to decide whether to leave the ministry.

If they did, they would be able to retain their teaching jobs at their current schools. If not, they would have to move to other schools still under the ministry's control.

The alternative, which has yet to be finalized, would either allow teachers to remain with the ministry indefinitely or give them a five-year grace period after which they would have to renew their employment with the ministry every year.

Around the Nation news roundup is sourced from the pages of The Nation and Kom Chad Luek newspapers.

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Emperor Akihito

Gobies are fish, and like many of their terrestrial relatives, they like to fight. This makes them interesting to observe, not least because some species, mudskippers for example, do their fighting on land. But that alone doesn't make them easy to fully comprehend. Indeed, as it happens, understanding the goby is a fight in which Man has yet to triumph.

It's a small fish – most species of goby are only a little larger than your index finger – but that's only part of what makes their study such a challenge.

Prof Daniel P Lindstrom, the author of numerous treatises on gobies, has occupied the better part of his adult life in trying to overcome that challenge. To a larger extent than most, he has succeeded, but it hasn't always been easy.

A signal impediment is the simple fact that it's hard to get down and dirty with vastly different species. Their words of love are differently perceived; their psychology apprehended only with difficulty, and the effort frequently unrewarding.

Gobies are tremendously fruitful. They breed in the billions, but they are not a commercial catch. You don't get into goby research for its get-rich-quick potential. Yet Prof Lindstrom, who until last year coordinated the coastal and marine resources graduate program at the University of Hawaii's prestigious Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, has largely made a career of it.

Pursuit of gobioid demystification has brought him from the famous Marine Biological Laboratory at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, to the Philippines, to the University of Hawaii – and, yes, even to the private lab of the Emperor of Japan.

Along the way he visited Phuket, where he now does consulting, while maintaining research into the goby family of fishes.

Lindstrom, a big barrel-chested American of Swedish extraction in his mid-forties, was born in Chicago. "The ocean became my thing," he recalled. "I think ... because of Jacques Cousteau. My mother came from Nova Scotia, so when we went to visit – my cousin had a home on the water – that's when I learned to sail."

At home he maintained an aquarium, and upon reaching manhood served with the Ocean Research and Education Society in Gloucester, Massachusetts, as bosun's mate on the research vessel *Regina Maris*.

His duties were varied – data collection, ship maintenance and standing watch – as the boat traveled from the Caribbean Sea to the Davis Strait, above the Arctic Circle off Greenland's west coast, where icebergs are continually discharged.

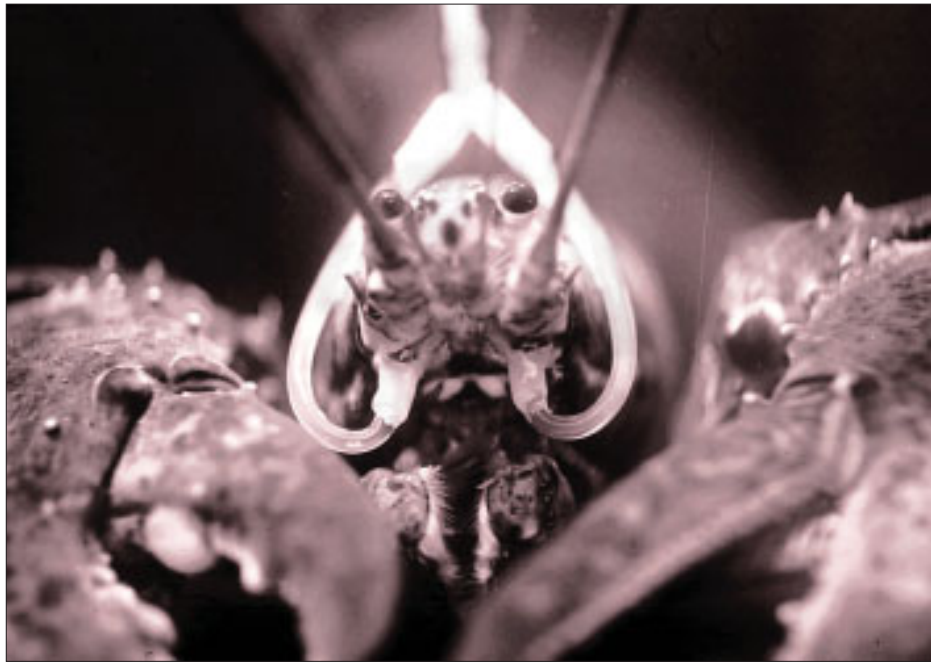
Later, Lindstrom took his baccalaureate in biology at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California, where the waters contain a peculiarly interesting goby: one that is blind and cohabits in ocean burrows with a blind shrimp. There he assisted as curator of the Museum of Natural History's vertebrate collection.

Ironically, the world's smallest vertebrate is a half-inch long goby, but it was not till two years after he had left Westmont, in 1987, while captaining a 53-foot sailing yacht from Singapore to Phuket, that gobies grabbed his attention.

"I was at Koh Racha, watching the mudskippers," he said, "when I decided on the project." Mudskipper society, with its posturing and frequent conflicts over territory, is appealingly dramatic.

But it was some years be-

Gobies fascinate marine biologist Prof Daniel Lindstrom. That fascination has taken him all over the world, from Hawaii to the private laboratory of the Emperor of Japan and, now, to Phuket. Patsya Chongtong learned quite a bit about him – and a lot about gobies.



Prof Lindstrom cut his academic teeth on lobsters (above), but these days he is a world expert on gobies.

fore he could get his goby project going. First, he had to deal with another species. "I did my master's thesis on lobsters," he explained. In researching lobsters – research published in the *Journal of Experimental Biology* and subsequently used by popular science writer Trevor Corson in his surprising book, *The Secret Life of Lobsters* – Lindstrom developed a unique procedure for collecting lobster urine.

Urine, as it happens, is central to the crustaceans' sex life: "In lobsters," Lindstrom and his fellows observed in a paper, "it is not the male but the female that actively searches for the mating partner. Females choose the dominant male, which usually resides in a secure shelter." It seems that females, of whatever species, all want the same thing from males.

"Following an exchange of

urine-borne signals that probably provides ... the male with information about [her] sex and reproductive state, [she] enters the shelter for a co-habitation period of up to two weeks ... Thereafter the female remains in the mating shelter guarded by the male ... during her vulnerable ... period."

The underlying conundrum was, how do lobsters identify dominance in a male? It is apparently related to the amount of serotonin sulphate, a neurotransmitter, in the urine. Lindstrom's apparatus – two tubes glued over the lobsters' urine vents connected to floating collecting tubes – allowed the lobsters free movement.

"I'm very good at making fish happy," said the professor. Happy lobsters release about 1% of their body weight as urine every 12 hours; two percent after

feeding. Lindstrom was first to figure out a way for the beasts to move freely while urine was collected – thus relieving them of human-induced stress, and ensuring reliable samples.

His work with gobies also involved "making fish happy", and that brought Lindstrom into contact with the Emperor of Japan. It was 1999: he had just completed his doctoral degree in zoology at the University of Hawaii and was at a conference in New Orleans of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists, of which he is a lifetime member.

"I gave a talk, and during the break I saw one of my PhD committee members talking to two Japanese gentlemen. He waved me over, and as I got there, I heard him say, 'He's the real expert on that' – meaning me – which could be either good or bad." The subject was gobies.

The committee member, Dr Robert Kinzie, told him: "They run the emperor's laboratory." Then he asked: "Remember those fish I took from your system and sent to the Japanese emperor?"

"I'd built a big system at the university to keep those species happy and reproducing," Lindstrom recounted.

"No," he answered, he didn't remember Kinzie doing any such thing: the fish were part of a study – and should not have been removed.

"Oh," said Kinzie. "I must have sneaked in when you were gone." Lindstrom had been the first to make gobies spawn in captivity – and that was precisely what the Japanese wanted to know how to do.

"Bob suggested that as I was going to the Philippines that summer: 'You probably have to lay over in Tokyo,' he said. 'Then

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Prof Lindstrom: 'I'm very good at making fish happy.'

you have to visit the Imperial Palace,' said the Japanese professors."

The deceased Showa emperor, Hirohito, was a marine biologist. "He did his work on starfish, I think," said Lindstrom. "Akihito did his PhD on the same fishes I'm studying."

When he arrived at the palace, Lindstrom was impressed. "We entered at the south gate, and passed through a 30-40ft door to a wooded area with big birds and

ravens. It's right in the center of Tokyo and like nothing anywhere else - beautiful."

He was a little surprised at the lab, however. "I was thinking, 'He's an emperor. He's got to have great resources. But it wasn't like that; it was functional.

First, they are "amphidromous", meaning that they live in both salt- and freshwater. They spend their adult lives upstream, where they lay eggs, which are flushed out to sea by the billion.

"Gobies are 'r-selected'," explained Lindstrom, "which means they lay large numbers of

If it were me, I'd have the latest gadgets and computers - heck, you're in Japan! But it was just functional."

His hosts met him and showed round the facilities. "Here are our specimens," they said blandly. "Here are the fish of yours that Bob sent. There's the emperor."

The emperor nodded. Akihito wore a charcoal gray suit: "Nothing flashy," said Lindstrom, "not even a necktie, I don't think." His attire fit the surroundings.

Since his first visit, Prof Lindstrom and the Japanese have continued to trade specimens and he has returned twice to the palace laboratory. That communication continues chiefly because gobies are interesting in a number of ways.

eggs but only a few survive to adulthood."

After the females finish laying, the males guard the encapsulated oval eggs, which are deposited in crevices and on old shells. Their perilous journey to the sea begins when they are merely "a yolk sac with a tail attached". Although only a few from each hatch survive, the waters team with them when they return.

"[The shoals of gobies have] an interesting cultural side effect," noted Lindstrom, "because, right as they return they are quite tasty. Everywhere they occur, the local language has a separate word for each stage in their development. Hawaiians even came up with terms equivalent to "genus" and "species".

Gobies also have un-fish-like capabilities: "They are amazing climbers," said Lindstrom. "One species lives up a 400-foot vertical drop waterfall - the Akaka Falls - on the Big Island of Hawaii, and they move pretty quick. They're the ultimate rock climbers!" The fish's climbing feats are possible because its fins are united into a "sucking disk" on the belly.

For Lindstrom, the enigma is where they originated. "They're freshwater fish, but five species live on Hawaii, the most isolated archipelago on earth. So how did they get there?"

"This project's about 10 years old. I've been collecting animals from 11 genera. By comparing genetic characteristics

from specimens in each location we find out a lot about how they get around."

His hunch is they drifted to Hawaii from Japan or the Philippines. "That's where their closest relatives are now. But that changes over time. All you can say is, that's the way it is now."

One thing the professor - an accomplished underwater photographer, advanced research scuba diver, arc welder, diesel mechanic and sailboat racer as well as a biologist - isn't saying,

'I was thinking, "He's an emperor. He's got to have great resources." But it wasn't like that ... If it were me, I'd have the latest gadgets and computers ... But it was just functional.'

but obviously worries about, is that time may be running out for research because of reef destruction.

"The tsunami was a drop in the bucket compared with what humans have done to coral reefs. If [a reef] comes back, it will come back as diverse as it can be. The problem is that the tiny corals

start on other - broken - pieces of coral. Those break off and the new coral is destroyed.

"So it isn't as simple as people think - that if you just stop destroying, everything will grow back; because you may have pushed the system so far [over the edge] that it can't recover, at least not in our lifetimes."

Daniel P. Lindstrom, PhD, is a Project Consultant with Asian Premier Holidays (74/90 Poonphol Night Plaza, Poonphol Road, Phuket City). For more information contact Tel: 076-246260; 06-2826070 or Email: dr.dan@asianpremier.com or visit the website: www.asianpremier.com

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This week



STAGED SUPPORT: Banthai Beach Resort & Spa General Manager Gerard Tan (left) and Deputy Managing Director Panee Koaysomboon (center) welcome popular Japanese singer Mitsuko Nakamura at a February 7 concert at the resort in Patong to raise money for the Kamala School Tsunami Disaster Fund.



FUND FAIR: Phuket Red Cross President Maneephan Uswarangkura (front, 2nd from right) and her team open a fund-raising booth for the Phuket Red Cross at the recent Wat Chalong Fair.



TURTLE POWER: Kanjana Adulyanukosol (left), of the Phuket Marine Biological Center, receives 19 baby green sea turtles that hatched on the beach in front of Le Meridien Phuket Beach Resort & Spa but were unable to make the journey to the water's edge, from Hotel Security Chief Anand Vanthaisong (2nd from left) and Guest Service Manager Kampanart Makaramanee (3rd from left).



ON A HIGH NOTE: Jazz vocalist Carole Marco (seated, center) and Diane Thomas (seated, right), Academic Director of ELT Thailand, celebrate their February 4 birthday with friends at Wine Connection at Fisherman Way Business Center in Chalong.



BBAP-ALOOLA: British Business Association – Phuket (BBAP) President Martin Carpenter (3rd from left) and fellow BBAP members enjoy their monthly gathering, held recently at the Saxophone pub in Patong.



PRESSING ON: Phuket Rajabhat University students Suwakon Rakmanee (left) and Natcha Yuttaworawit (right) recently completed a three-month internship at the *Phuket Gazette*. They are pictured with reporter Nattamon Ratcharak, Desk Editor Stephen Fein (standing) and Deputy Editor Stephen Myles.

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Upcoming events on the island

Until February 24: "Abstracts of Industry" photo exhibition. This exhibition of pictures by award-winning US-born photographer Chris Swift, is on display in the foyer of the British Curriculum International School.

It can be seen between 8:30 am and 3:30 pm, Monday to Friday. It features a sugar mill, boats and trains in abstract, taken mainly in and around Bangkok and Kanchanaburi.

For more information contact Tel: 07-1129568; Email: cswift1@swift-mail.com; or visit the website at www.swift-images.com. See also page 11 of this issue.

Until February 28: "We Are Not Alone" art exhibition. This exhibition features the work of 20 artists from the Andaman coastal region.

The goal of the exhibition, say the organizers, is to show solidarity with those who are concerned about the environment.

The show, at Phuket Art Gallery, 74 Thalang Rd, Phuket City, will be open to the public from 10 am to 8 pm, seven days a week, until February 28.

February 23-26: Badminton talent search. Phuket will host the first round of the Master Thai-



Dramatic images by photographer Chris Swift are on show at the British Curriculum International School until February 24.

land Badminton Professional 2006.

The aim of the tournament, staged by the Badminton Association of Thailand in co-operation with the Sports Authority of Thailand, is to identify the best badminton players in the country, region by region.

The Phuket round will be played in Building 2 of the Saphan Hin Sports Complex from Feb-

ruary 23 to 26, starting around 10 am each day.

There will be three other rounds of the nationwide search for talent: in Khon Kaen (March 16-19), in Rayong (May 18-21), and in Chiang Mai (July 13-16). The finals will be held in Bangkok in September.

The competition, played to International Badminton Federation rules, will be divided into

men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles, and mixed doubles.

The winners of the regional rounds will split total prize money of 1.6 million baht, while those who make it to the Bangkok final will compete for a slice of a total purse of one million baht.

For more information, call Tel: 02-2510712 or 02-2553391-2.

April 6: Chakri Day (Public Holiday). Chakri Day commemorates the origins of the Chakri dynasty, founded by Rama I, who established Bangkok as the nation's capital. HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the ninth monarch of the Chakri dynasty.

April 13-15: Songkran (Thai New Year - Public Holiday). Also known as the Water Festival, and held during the driest months in Thailand, Songkran is celebrated by Thais throughout the country by pouring - traditionally only a little, but these days more playfully a lot - of water on other people to wish them good luck for the New Year.

April 12-16: Phuket Bike Week. Phuket Bike Week 2006 will be held from April 12-16, 2006

The Grand Dinner by Ride Thailand and Phuket Riders' Club will be on April 14 at Thai Naan Restaurant, opposite Central Festival Phuket. Tickets are for sale at 300 baht each and include dinner, a show and competitions. Seating is limited and early bookings are recommended.

There will be an "Otop Market Party" on April 14-15.

Visit www.ridethailand.com or www.phuketbikeweek.com for more information

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Diesel power comes to that icon of American offroad capability, the Jeep – now built by German-dominated DaimlerChrysler, with a motor from Italy.

Diesel's not a dirty word

The American market has traditionally shunned diesel-powered cars, though times may be changin' now that DaimlerChrysler (DCX) has added a diesel motor to its smaller Jeep range: the 2006 Liberty Limited Diesel.

While DCX is not making any firm predictions for the Liberty's success in its native North America, a diesel Jeep is certain to find many admirers in Europe and parts of Asia – if it eventually gets there.

Launched last month at the North American International

Auto Show in Detroit, the Liberty Limited Diesel is Chrysler's first mid-range foray into the world of Rudolf Diesel, although in some markets Chrysler's retro-styled PT Cruiser is available with a 2.2-liter oil-burner.

The engine in the Liberty is, inevitably, a European-built unit: a 2.8-liter common-rail diesel (CRD). Producing a modest 160bhp (118kW) and a hefty 400Nm of torque at just 1,800rpm, the Liberty drives through a beefed-up five-speed automatic transmission.

According to Chrysler's website, customers in the US are



By Jeff Heselwood

increasingly expressing interest in diesel products, citing improved fuel economy, a 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, extended range between fill-ups and enhanced towing capacity.

The 2006 Jeep Liberty has, among other refinements, an electronic stability program (ESP) as standard, greatly enhancing its capability both on- and off-road.

If there is a discernible difference between what the driver requests of the steering input and the direction the vehicle actually takes, the ESP applies selective braking and throttle to correct the Liberty's course.

The system is calibrated to allow greater control in difficult conditions, while allowing normal driving without being intrusive.

The program integrates the anti-lock braking system, traction control, Brake Assist and an electronic roll-over detection system.



There are two four-wheel drive options: the Command-Trac is a part-time system that allows drivers to shift into high-range 4WD at speeds up to 88kmh, while Select-Trac is a full-time all-wheel drive system.

The Liberty Limited has a chrome grille, chrome side moldings and chrome roof rails. Standard are cloth bucket seats, a powered driver's seat, leather steering wheel and 17-inch aluminum wheels. Options include full-length side air curtains, leather upholstery, sun roof and a premium audio set-up.

The Liberty is the first diesel in the US mid-size SUV segment offering, says Chrysler, "...the torque of a V8, performance of a V6 and the fuel economy of a four-cylinder engine". The automaker claims the diesel provides up to 32% better fuel economy compared with gas engines, with an average 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

The engine is sourced from DaimlerChrysler's Italian subsidiary, VM Motori, which also supplies Jeep with a diesel motor for its larger Grand Cherokee. While the Liberty's diesel is only 2.8 liters, it will propel the 4x4 from rest to 100kmh in under 10 seconds; nothing to be ashamed of considering its excellent off-road capability.

While the Liberty Limited CRD sells for about US\$1,000 more than the gas version in the US, its long-term benefits are obvious in terms of fuel consumption and extended service intervals.

The Italian makers of the engine also offer a five-year warranty which should calm any fears about its longevity.

Although not yet available in Thailand, or for that matter anywhere outside the US – it is produced at Chrysler's Toledo plant in Ohio – the idea of a compact diesel Jeep is extremely appealing. Let's hope DaimlerChrysler releases it to the rest of the world soon.

Jeff Heselwood may be contacted by email at jhc@netvigator.com



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Atkins diet needn't be dull

Guest chef

By Jenna Wise

On May 1 the Green Man pub in Chalong will be celebrate its 5th anniversary. Proprietors Howard Digby-Johns and Poonpun "Nui" Jangruga are looking forward to the May Day celebrations, which will be focused firmly on family enjoyment.

The Green Man has become well known for its excellent cuisine and now has the talents of Chef Ryan Waddell to continue this tradition.

Originally from Detroit, Ryan has lived in Thailand for five years and started working at the Green Man in October last year.

"I'm now slowly re-evaluating the menu," he says. "This is taking a while as it's so comprehensive.

"But one immediate change is the inclusion of dishes that are suitable for people following the Atkins Diet."

Along with Ryan, Howard and several customers are happy to sample the new meals – they are all following this diet. They have formed a group named "Fight the Flab", which meet every Tuesday evening to monitor progress.

It seems to be having positive effects, although Howard does say that he misses beer. Under the Atkins Diet carbohydrates are strictly limited, but this doesn't necessarily mean that no alcohol is allowed.

Anyone wanting to join in on Tuesday evenings, or simply know more about the Atkins Diet, is welcome to pop into the Green Man and talk to Ryan, Howard or K. Nui.

For those who don't need or don't want to lose weight, Ryan plans to include some Tex-Mex meals on the menu in the near future. But in the meantime, here



Losing weight need not be all pain, if Ryan Waddell is doing the cooking. Left, Gammon Steak Florentine; right, Cajun Rib-eye Caesar Salad.

are a few recipes for those who are following the Atkins Diet.

Cajun Rib-eye Caesar Salad For 4 people

Ingredients:

- 4 220gm rib-eye steaks;
- 8 fried bacon rashers;
- 8 tablespoons (approx) sunflower oil

For the salad and dressing:
4 heads Romaine lettuce;
1 egg yolk;
100gm finely grated Parmesan cheese;
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice;
6 garlic cloves;
8 anchovy fillets;
2-3 cups olive oil;
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.

For the Cajun seasoning: (This will make much more than you need, but you can store it indefinitely in a tightly sealed jar in a cool place.)
½ cup paprika powder;

- 6 tablespoons coarse salt;
- ¼ cup coarsely ground black pepper;
- 3 tablespoons dried basil;
- 3 tablespoons garlic powder;
- 2 tablespoons onion powder;
- 2 tablespoons dried oregano;
- 2 tablespoons cayenne pepper;
- 2 tablespoons white pepper;
- 2 tablespoons dried thyme.

Method:

Season the steaks with salt and cover each steak with sunflower oil in order to have enough oil smeared evenly over both sides of the steaks for the Cajun seasoning to stick to them. Coat the steaks in Cajun seasoning and leave for 10 minutes.

Crush the garlic cloves together with the anchovies and egg yolk. Add 60gm Parmesan cheese and the lemon juice, and blend well. Drizzle the olive oil very slowly into the mixture so that it does not separate. The result should be a thick mayonnaise.

Grill the steaks to your preference. Wash the lettuce and tear

the leaves into large pieces, mix them with the dressing and arrange on plates. The steaks should be sliced thinly and placed on top. Garnish with the remaining Parmesan cheese and bacon rashers.

Gammon Steak Florentine For 4 people

Ingredients:

- 4 220gm gammon steaks;
- 8 eggs;
- 440gm grated cheddar cheese;
- 120gm finely chopped onion;
- 20gm finely chopped garlic;
- 4 large tomatoes, halved;
- 400gm fresh baby spinach;
- Salt and freshly ground pepper;
- Mixed salad of your choice.

Method:

Season the steaks with salt and

pepper, and sauté in butter. Remove the pulp from the tomato halves and chop it roughly. Mix this with the onion and garlic and fill the tomato skins. Top with a little grated cheese.

Poach the eggs and lightly wilt the spinach in a pan. Put two poached eggs and some spinach on top of each steak, then cover with grated cheese.

Place the steaks under a grill until the cheese has melted. Serve with the stuffed tomatoes and a mixed salad.

The Green Man English Country Pub. 82/15 Moo 4, Patak Rd, Rawai, Phuket 83130. Tel: 076-280757.

Website: www.the-green-man.net. K. Nui Tel: 01-894-7736. Chef Ryan Waddell Tel: 09-7278762.



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Thailand TRAVELER

By Bill Owen

Just where is Koh Maphrao? The looming deadline for this article was incentive enough to find out, so I took along my 14-year-old son, Chris, on an adventure to discover the island.

Koh Maphrao – Coconut Island – is just to the east of Phuket, and is easily accessible from Laem Hin, an area deservedly famed for its seafood restaurants. At the adjacent jetty simply hire one of the waiting longtail boats for the three-minute crossing.

Our destination on the island is Camp Belvedere, owned and run by a veteran Swiss expatriate, Bruno Adam.

In the early 1990s, Bruno ran a Patong “empire” that included the French Kiss bars, a guesthouse and speedboat tours. But in early 2001, with his wife pregnant, he decided that a radical lifestyle change was in order and decided to set up a fruit farm on 20 rai of land he had bought on Koh Maphrao. He planted thousands of durian and other fruit trees that still flourish on his land today.

Four years into the farming experiment, Bruno decided to change direction again and set up Camp Belvedere, which opened in November last year.

It is an eco-friendly resort, located on one of the most spectacular spots anywhere in or around Phuket.

The initial drive from the Koh Maphrao’s jetty in the island’s one and only 4WD vehicle is fascinating.

Driving through the mangrove forests, coconut plantations and passing through the small Muslim fishing village on the north side of the island is a delight. It seems as if time has stood still here for years, which in many ways it has.

It’s only when you begin to skirt the east coast and then suddenly head to the hills that you realize just how isolated and natu-

Going quietly nuts on Koh Maphrao



Main picture: What a shame the beach is so crowded. Inset, top, the sunrise wakes up the chalets. Above, all the excitement of the chessboard.

rally “powerful” this location really is.

The driver changes into low ratio and mutters something that sounds like “hang on” and off we go, seemingly vertically. The half-concrete road snakes through the trees, and after a 10-minute switchback ride we emerge into a clearing at the top of the ridge and to the camp, which overlooks the sea some 100 meters below.

Camp Belvedere, which has almost been completed, currently comprises six chalets – some of which have two bedrooms, making them ideal for families – and a restaurant-bar-lounge area serving excellent European and Thai food, where Bruno seems to constantly hold court.

On our arrival he was entertaining other Phuket-based Swiss with a combination of local island stories, a little friendly banter and servings of his very

own special – and excellent – Spaghetti Bolognese.

The resort is quite basic, undeniably quirky and definitely fun. It is comfortable in a rustic sort of way and although there is little currently on offer as far as “real” resort facilities go, a swimming pool is due for completion soon.

The walk to the beach below is great – it takes just 10 minutes – as is the swimming, although I advise that you ask the all-purpose Bruno to collect you by truck for the return journey if you want to avoid potential heart attacks on the “challenging” ascent back to Camp Belvedere.

I asked my son for his thoughts after an afternoon of playing chess. “A little boring,” he said, “but amazing. At least they have UBC for tonight’s game!”

Amazing it certainly is, with some of the best views I have seen in the South. From all areas

of the resort – a wonderful 180° view, a real belvedere, or sala, to the east – overlooking Koh Yao Yai, Phi Phi and even the mountains of Krabi and Koh Lanta beyond. The panorama is so vast and grand, it’s almost hypnotic, a soul-searching sight.

The rest of the island is not for those looking for the bar scene or usual beach hangouts, but it is

definitely well worth escaping to for a while. It is an island simply waiting for things to happen.

Happen they will. Rumors abound locally about new developments, and The Village villa project, which is soon to start, will bring change to Koh Maphrao. But I’ll be back to see Bruno – and the views from Camp Belvedere – soon.

HOW TO GET THERE

By car or taxi to Laem Hin Pier, just north of Phuket City, off the southbound carriageway of Thepkrasattri Rd, then by longtail boat. Cars can be parked safely in the Laem Hin car park overnight.

WHERE TO STAY

Camp Belvedere – the only place on the island. Chalets from 750 baht a night.

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Puzzles

The Cryptic Crossword

Spot the Difference

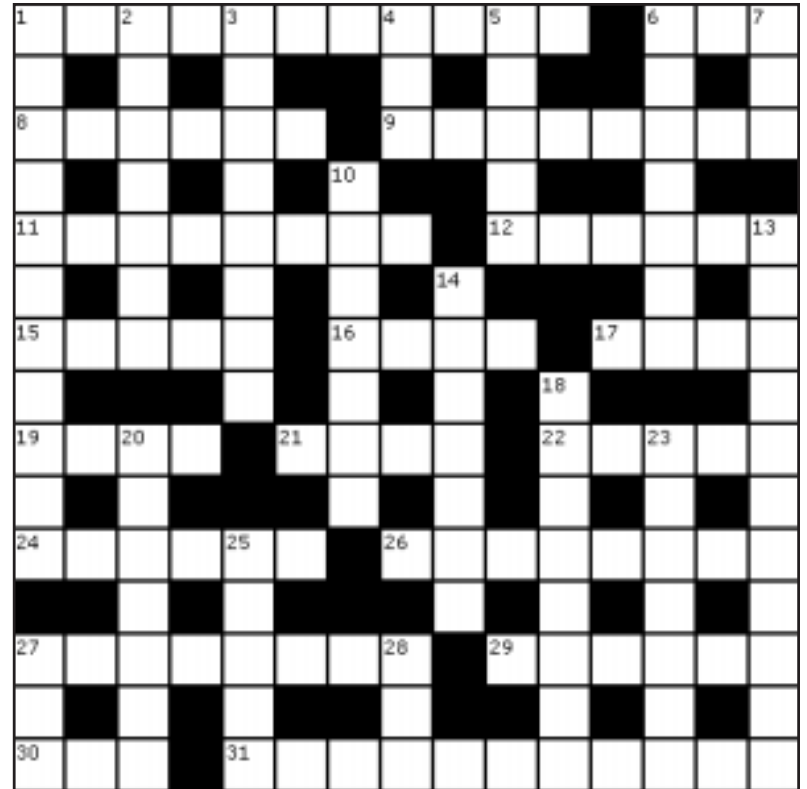


Can you find the seven differences between the two cartoons below? And can you find them faster than the rest of the family?



ACROSS

1. Soak the French knave! He's high when he works. (11)
6. Promise 5? Ouch! (3)
8. Network with solar partner. (6)
9. Visitors, it's confused in Loire town. (8)
11. Supports tree base, for after. (5,3)
12. In this place, Sy, it's cause for excommunication. (6)
15. Point into area for games. (5)
16. Help with 100 in sour liquid. (4)
17. Bitterness, it's said, about the old country. (4)
19. Flip dime – but it's the same. (4)
21. Home with no hills. (4)
22. Can General Electric Co knock out a lizard? (5)
24. Dodges led Sue astray. (6)
26. Diaries of day in Paris – not applicable to learners. (8)
27. Repeat, as to dead ringer. (8)
29. Sheep all over the place? Iron 'em! (6)
30. Sailor goes on the road, perhaps. (3)
31. Multiply anti-abortion speed. (11)

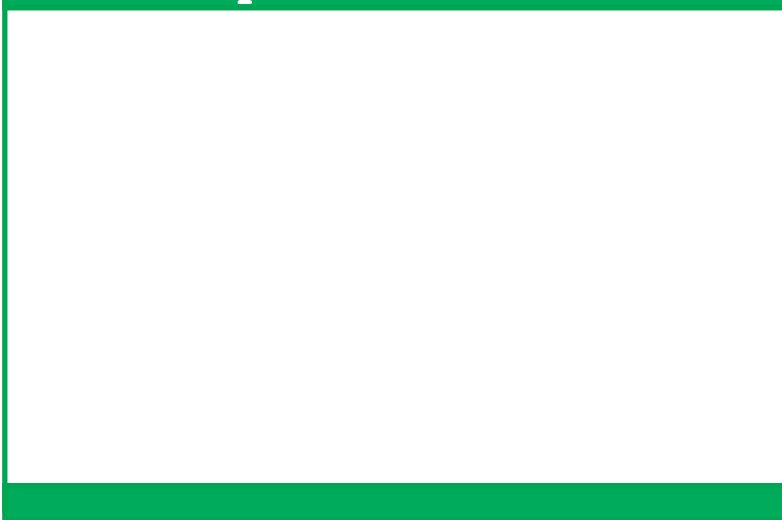


Compiled by Tortuus. © 2006

DOWN

1. Eat with slightly odd cousin. It's the best! (11)
2. Unpleasant view, and its effect, perhaps. (7)
3. Quiet Muscovite from Bismarck's country. (8)
4. Black aircraft. (3)
5. Kind of love that is very damaging. (5)
6. I've cars crashing in my guts. (7)
7. Outside, a pair of cardinals existed. (3)
10. Eel swallows learners, righteously. (7)
13. Park the saint in cowardly person. (11)
14. Letter from conflict is made-up. (7)
18. Give gear distress. (8)
20. Currency unit with commercial – or country. (7)
23. Ruler's called Ina? No. His wife. (7)
25. Furnish with mail witticism? (5)
27. Turn 30 into traitor. (3)
28. Measure point to learners. (3)

Scribble Space



EZ Quiz

1. In 1912, Norwegian Roald Amundsen led the first successful expedition to what place?
2. In computers, what does kbps stand for?
3. Which country will host the 2006 soccer World Cup?
4. What is the closest star to our solar system?
5. What basketball team does Chinese star Yao Ming play for?
6. What is the most common blood type?
7. Which gas forms the most of the air we breathe?
8. What is the correct name for the symbol "&"?
9. Of the four known physical forces, which is the weakest?
10. What do we call a year in which February has 29 days?

Answers on next page.

su | do | ku

© Puzzles by Pappocom

Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | 8 | | |
| | 5 | | 9 | 7 |
| | | 7 | 3 | 1 |
| | | 8 | | |
| | 2 | | 6 | 3 |
| 5 | | | | 7 |
| | | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| | | 9 | 4 | |
| 8 | | | | 5 |

The principle of Sudoku is very simple: each row, each column and each "box" of nine squares within the puzzle must contain all the numbers from 1 to 9 with, naturally, no repetitions. Guess if you will, but each Sudoku puzzle can be solved using logic alone. Beware: there is only one solution to this puzzle, which is on the next page.

Brain Buster

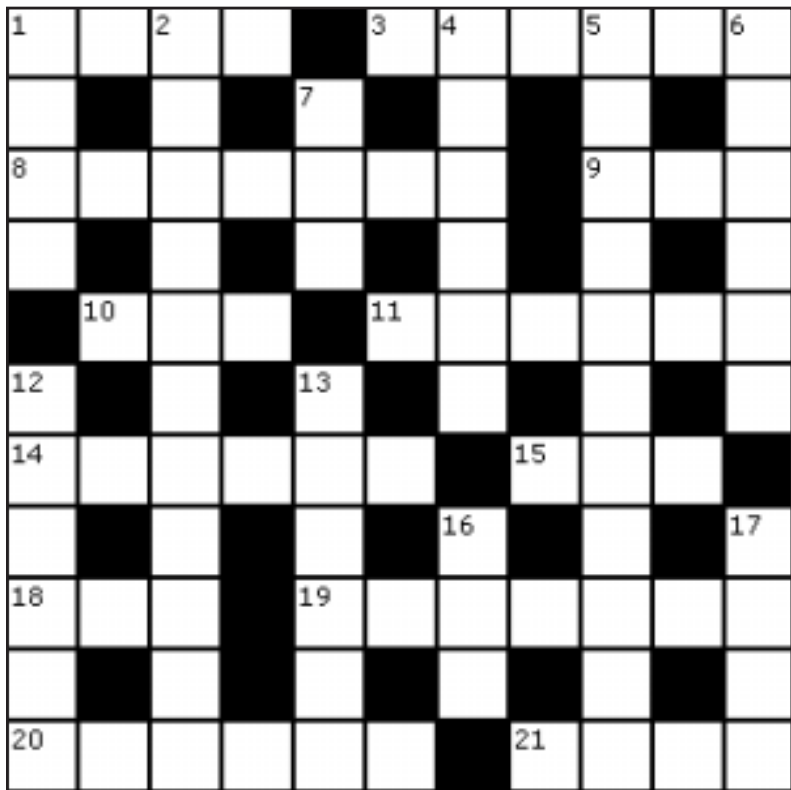
These words all belong to the same "family" because they have something in common:

- footloose
- committed
- successful
- address
- millennium

Which of the following words belong to the same family?

- silly
- ancestor
- millstone
- heedless

Answer on next page.



Quick Crossword

ACROSS

1. Rapid economic expansion.
3. Guitar maker.
8. Looking lecherously.
9. Rosalind, in short.
10. Top fighter pilot.
11. Layers.
14. More courageous.
15. Flavor enhancer.
18. URL ender.
19. Porridge essential.
20. Very talkative person.
21. Leave it alone – Editor.

DOWN

1. Door security device.
2. Demands too much money.
4. Metal bars.
5. Excel output.
6. Car maker.
7. Grenade safety device.
12. Stretched square.
13. Wide-brimmed hat.
16. Usually goes with “Co”.
17. Fly like a bat.

Solution below, right

Get your brain in gear with The Monster Quiz



Kids! Ask Mum and Dad to help you find the answers to these questions. They're not easy but, if you do some research, you should be able to find the answers to all of them.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Which 12-novel series by Anthony Powell begins with <i>A Question of Upbringing</i>? 2. What did a cow called Elm Farm Ollie achieve on February 18, 1930? 3. Which singer's albums include <i>Stories from the City, Stories from the Sea, Is This Desire?</i> and <i>Uh Huh Her</i>? 4. Which cult film features the line “Here hare here.”? 5. What is virga? 6. Who painted the triptych <i>The Garden of Earthly Delights</i>? 7. Derek and Clive were characters created by which two comedians? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. What three objects appear beneath the star and crescent on the coat of arms of Tunisia? 9. <i>Kvetch, Oy gevalt!</i> and <i>shmendrik</i> are from which language? 10. Which World War I poet wrote <i>The Soldier</i>? 11. The adage “There never was a good war or a bad peace” is attributed to whom? 12. Who wrote <i>The Bonfire of the Vanities</i>? 13. What does the signal SOS mean? 14. Who won the 2005 Man Booker Prize, and for which book? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. Mountain ranges called Sierra Madre can be found in which two countries? 16. Would one eat, observe or dance an orrery? 17. Which chemical element has the Atomic Number 105? 18. <i>PCD</i> is the debut album of which girl band? 19. He is the co-founder of the 1980s satirical magazine <i>Spy</i>, and is now Editor-in-Chief of <i>Vanity Fair</i>. Who is he? 20. Which cartoon character's tagline is “Suffering succotash”? |
|---|---|--|

Answers below, left.

Puzzle Solutions

Monster Quiz Answers

1. *A Dance to the Music of Time*; 2. She was the first cow to fly – and be milked – in an aircraft; 3. PJ Harvey; 4. *Withnail & I*; 5. Precipitation that evaporates before reaching the ground; 6. Hieronymus Bosch; 7. Peter Cook and Dudley Moore; 8. A ship, scales and a lion rampant clutching a scimitar; 9. Yiddish; 10. Rupert Brooke; 11. Benjamin Franklin; 12. Tom Wolfe; 13. *Si Opus Sit* (Give relief where necessary); 14. John Banville, for *The Sea*; 15. Mexico and The Philippines; 16. Observe; it is a mechanical model of the solar system; 17. Dubnium; 18. The Pussycat Dolls; 19. E. Graydon Carter; 20. Sylvester the Cat.

Solution to Cartoon Puzzle



EZ Trivia Answers

Answers: 1. The South Pole; 2. Kilobits per second; 3. Germany; 4. Alpha Centauri, which is actually a triple-star system about 4.3 light years away; 5. Houston Rockets; 6. O-negative; 7. Nitrogen; 8. An ampersand. The symbol is a combination of the letters in “et”, which is Latin for “and”; 9. Gravity; 10. A leap year.

Brain Buster Answer

All the members of the “family” contain two sets of double letters (eg, coMMITTed). So “heedless” is the only one in the second list that belongs.

Cryptic Crossword Solution



Quick Crossword Solution



Sudoku solution



Environmental activist assassinated in forest

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of February 15-28, 2001

PA KHLOK: Environmental activist Jurin Rachapol, 50, was shot dead on January 30 while out in a forest collecting cashew nut leaves for salad.

Pol Capt Anan Jengjit of Thalang Police Station said that K. Jurin went into the forest around 9 am with his wife. He was shot three times and died instantly.

A village source who asked not to be named told the *Gazette* that K. Jurin was an activist opposed to mangrove forest incursion by a "big investor" who had set up a prawn farm.

"A week ago, K. Jurin was threatened by staff of the farm, who fired six shots into the air when he went into the forest to find cashew leaves," said the source. "This was the first time since then that he had gone into the forest."

Another activist opposed to the prawn farm, Siripoj Cheechang, was run over by a pickup truck in October. (See also *Gazette* issue of October 15, 2000.) Though badly injured, K. Siripoj survived.

The man accused of the attempt on K. Siripoj's life, prawn

farm worker Buncha Noppawong, was arrested and is currently out on bail awaiting trial.

On February 3, villagers – who said they were living in a "climate of fear" following the shooting – appealed to Interior Minister Banyat Banthadtan, who was visiting Phuket at the time, to ensure that swift action was taken to find K. Jurin's killer.

Thalang District Chief Officer Kanthee Silapa said that police know the whereabouts of the two main suspects in the murder, and a close watch is being kept on them.

Meanwhile, the owner of the Wachara Prawn Farm, Somsak Wongsawanond, 36, surrendered to police at Phuket Town Police Station after a warrant was issued for his arrest.

The warrant was issued after police investigating K. Jurin's murder amassed evidence suggesting that Somsak fired a pistol into the air six times in the same forest where the murder took place.

Police said that Somsak denied both charges. He was released two days later on bail of 500,000 baht.

THE TIME machine

News from the past

Woman eats free – and police get a photograph

From the Phuket Gazette, issue of February, 1996

PHUKET TOWN: Aroon See Tong is a nightspot that emphasizes fun and good times for its night-tripping patrons, but at the end of the night the management likes the bill paid, or it's down to the police station.

Jehtjan Sae-Lim, 23, from Prachuab Khiri Khan, ordered without restraint, but when the bill came she was found to be without a penny and hence was arrested.

Questioning disclosed that she had ordered expensive foreign liquor and sent up many garlands to the sing-a-song girls. When staff came with a bill for over 10,000 baht, she told them simply that she had no money.

A search of her person turned up no money at all.

It developed that this was by no means the first time Jehtjan had engaged in activities of this sort. Over the past year she had made a career of being a deadbeat. Many other nightspots had been hit by her and she had already served two months in jail after a previous arrest. Some club managers refused to press charges but other insisted that she be jailed if she couldn't pay the bill.

Jehtjan said that after she had gone home from being jailed last time, her parents refused to let her in, so she came to Phuket where she continued to do exactly as she had done before.

In this, case, since management declined to press charges, the police released her after taking a photograph.

In The Stars

by Isla Star

AQUARIUS (January 21-February 19): You should be able to cruise through this week with no particular stresses. However, avoid expecting others to see things your way on Monday and Tuesday; they will come to realize that your points are valid later in the week. Romance will not cause you any more sleepless nights when someone's intentions become crystal clear this weekend. Where finances are concerned, trust logic rather than instinct.

PISCES (February 20-March 20): If you can't see the way out of a trying situation at work, you will benefit from advice offered by Scorpio. This person has had a similar experience recently and came out unscathed, so listen carefully to these pearls of wisdom. Hot days for romance are Sunday and Monday; crossed wires later in the week could easily result in a cooler atmosphere. The color avocado green encourages calm.

ARIES (March 21-April 20): If you have been toying with the idea of relocation, you will receive good news this weekend. You will feel more fired up regarding career matters when you also hear of a chance to attain promotion of some sort. The most auspicious days for important meetings are Tuesday and Wednesday; your demands are certain to be agreed with on those days. Cancer would like to get to know you better.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21): It looks as if your New Year resolutions are paying off. If you decided you were tired of sidestepping certain issues, and took the buffalo by the horns, you'll have reason to celebrate this week. Romantic matters are also taking a turn in a more positive direction. The chemistry between you and a special someone will be intoxicating, regardless of whether physical distance is a drawback.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21): Someone close to you is indulging in monkey business, but astute Geminis will be hot on the trail. Business affairs need handling with kid gloves for the remainder of this month as there is an atmosphere of mistrust. This is a good time to think of ways to polish up your image. Pisces has some valid tips to offer before you embark on a shopping expedition. The number 6 is lucky this Saturday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23): You can't count on good luck with money this week. When a friend comes knocking on your door asking for a loan you should tactfully refuse. Expect to receive a social invitation from someone you have not been seeing eye-to-eye with recently. This is the perfect opportunity to set matters straight, so accept with grace. Midweek, a chance meeting with an attractive Aquarian gives you food for thought.

LEO (July 24-August 22): If you have had a lot on your mind recently you will benefit from a relaxing

break this weekend. Pack a bag and head for a remote spot to recharge your batteries. Your partner comes up with a watertight plan to boost finances this year; even if it doesn't immediately appeal, the idea is certain to grow on you. The color ivy green encourages a meditative mood.

VIRGO (August 23-September 23): You may grow tired of being involved in other people's problems; you will unearth at least one secret that you will wish had remained buried. Don't be afraid to distance yourself from all this drama. Leo has romantic intentions and could surprise you with a sensual suggestion. A minor medical problem early next week shouldn't be ignored. Wear the color tangerine to encourage more positive energy to flow.

LIBRA (September 24-October 23): Those born under the sign of the scales should make contingency plans for this weekend as arrangements will be liable to go haywire. The chances of finding something precious that was lost are good on Wednesday. If you want to get ahead in business ask sensible Sagittarius for advice, but don't rock the boat by expecting too much input. Take a break from worrying about money; obstacles blocking cash flow will be removed by the end of this month.

SCORPIO (October 24-November 22): This is the week to try a new approach to an old problem. Those born under the sign of Scorpio who haven't been able to see the forest for the trees should take some time out this weekend to gain fresh perspective. Your silver tongue gets you out of a tight spot on Monday, but there's a lesson to be learned about pushing your luck too far. The number 4 looks promising on Sunday.

SAGITTARIUS (November 23-December 21): Friendship is highlighted for Sagittarians until the end of the month. Make the most of auspicious astral conditions by socializing more and seeking out those who share your interests. Don't hesitate to take on more responsibility at work; there's light at the end of the tunnel in the form of promotion later this year. Capricorn has useful advice regarding a romantic dilemma, but don't listen to Aries, who is plain jealous.

CAPRICORN (December 22-January 20): Luck takes a turn for the better this week for those born under the sign of Capricorn. The stars are smiling on Capricorns who have been working hard since the start of the year. Your just rewards will be there for the taking. A personal relationship is still subject to misunderstandings; don't allow other people to interfere, even if they insist that they're only trying to be helpful. The color hibiscus red will encourage your unpredictable financial situation to stabilize.

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The Ranong 12: overstayers caught in the crossfire?

Here's the law: Stay in Thailand past the end of your permit to stay and you have broken the law. In fact, in any country in the world, that's the case.

But Thailand has long had a relaxed attitude to this law. Certainly, if police raid your Patong hotel and find that you have overstayed your visa, you are in trouble.

On the other hand, if you go to Immigration and, in effect, confess that you have overstayed, then the result has always been a slap-on-the-wrist fine of 200 baht per day of overstay.

In the wake of the arrest of 12 people by Tourist Police and Highway Police on February 8, Ranong Immigration reiterated that its slap-on-the-wrist policy remains unchanged. Anyone making it that far will be fined and allowed to make the hop into Burma and back again.

But anyone doing the run to Ranong should now be aware that, like wildebeest on migration crossing Kenya's Mara River, there are crocodiles waiting for them. Some will get eaten.

This is plainly not a nationwide drive by Immigration to crack down on overstays. Nor is it a nationwide drive by the Tourist Police and Highway Police. It is very much a local affair.

Just what is behind it is a matter for conjecture. The visa run bus company has alleged that the police were soliciting bribes in return for freedom. The police deny this. Indeed, the major in charge of the Tourist Police told the *Gazette*, "I can guarantee that the Tourist Police officers did not ask for money because we are not in trouble [financially] and I constantly remind them to not do that."

Others have theorized that the "Ranong 12" got caught in a battle between competing "visa run" companies. But no hard evidence has surfaced to support this theory.

There will undoubtedly be those who will argue that "the law is the law". But anyone familiar with Thailand will know that on-the-ground interpretation of the law is more important than the word of the law.

Although this attitude may often be convenient for those who push the boundaries of Thai law, it also means that there is no consistency. Tomorrow's interpretation may be radically different from today's.

While this particular local interpretation of immigration law pertains, those who find they have overstayed their visas are advised to fly out of the country. Thus far, neither the Tourist Police nor the Highway Police appear to be stopping aircraft.

- The Editor

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Letters

The *Gazette* is pleased to receive mail from readers. Please write to us at 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000, fax to 076-213971 or send an email to editor@phuketgazette.net

with your views for publication in our next issue. We reserve the right to edit all letters. Pseudonyms are acceptable only if your full name and address are supplied.

Copping out

Following your report regarding the lack of adequate policing on Koh Samui, may I suggest that some of Phuket's finest be redeployed to Samui to ensure the safety of that island's tourists?

Phuket seems to have an overabundance of these law enforcers, given that they are stationed on average, six or so at any one time to "check driving licenses", several times a week, on the roads of Phuket.

Ranca Trollope
Chalong

'Rude mistreatment' of 'accidental' felons

I could hardly believe it when I read about tourists being treated so rudely by the tourist police for a visa overstay.

Do the Thai government and people want tourists to come and help their country after the tsunami or not? You can't have it both ways - being anti-tourist and then taking the tourist dollar. This kind of treatment will eventually backfire because tourists want to be treated humanely and with respect.

I can understand if a tourist intentionally breaks the law but an overstay is not an intentional criminal act and in any case, the longer people stay here the more they will spend, so what is the big deal?

What are the authorities afraid of? Of someone who stays a long time and spends a lot of baht to help the fragile economy? Thailand will only hurt itself if this kind of rude mistreatment is allowed to continue.

I stayed [in Phuket] for six weeks last year but I don't know

how long I will stay this year after hearing about these 12 people being jailed like animals.

In fact, I may not come at all and keep my dollars in the US where people are treated better. My wife is Thai and cannot understand why I, as a foreigner, can't get better treatment when I visit. I think I will be tighter with my baht if this is the way that tourists are going to be treated.

Dwight Akins
USA

Rubbishing Phuket

I took a walk along the shore of Chalong Bay recently, from the pier to Soi Sukee. I could not believe the amount of garbage along the shoreline. Trash was littered everywhere and the smell was awful.

I saw a tour boat come in and unload its tourists. The crew then dumped garbage on the beach. I was so disgusted that I walked up to the boat and politely asked the crew to pick up the garbage and put it in a garbage can. They just laughed and told me to mind my own business.

Something needs to be done about this garbage. I came for a holiday to enjoy the sunshine and the beaches. I did not come here to visit the local dump.

Why doesn't the government take care of this problem?

C Clowes
By email

Not actually a TOT-failure this time

We've been having major problems with our TOT ADSL service for about a month now. In that time, it's actually worked a total of only a week.

We've called TOT's Phuket office numerous times. We've called TOT in Bangkok numerous times - they even recognize my voice now.

Finally, TOT workers came to the house after a month of complaints and solved the problem.

My question is this: K. Adirek (in charge of ADSL, Phuket), why has it taken so long? We were given a phone number in Phuket City to call, but the woman at the desk almost never answers the phone. My wife tried calling for half an hour the other day and it just rang and rang.

Staff at TOT in Bangkok told me that they had received many complaints about TOT staff in Phuket, and I can see why.

K. Adirek, you have used up your *geng jai* allowance. Once the TOT workers arrived, I was satisfied with the service. The problem was getting people to wake up and respond.

The "many complaints" that TOT Bangkok receives prompt me to think that many people in Phuket have their own "pathetic service" stories to tell. I'd like to collect such stories with a view to putting some pressure on these people to clean up their act and start delivering the quality of service that they promise.

Regardless of whether your problem turned out to be your mistake or theirs, I would like to hear your horror stories about bad service, unfulfilled promises of the "engineer" coming around, phones that were never answered, and so on.

Please email me with your complaints at cswift1@swift-mail.com.

Chris Swift
Kathu

Letters conveying views and suggestions are published here. Those seeking comment from government officials or business owners are published as *Issues & Answers* on the facing page.

Phuket: a forgotten destination?

FIRST PERSON

The cancellation of so many direct flights to the island is a big problem, and one I fear will eventually cause Phuket to fall off the tourism map if allowed to continue.

The PTA is planning to attend a TAT roadshow to Sydney and Melbourne from February 11 to 16. Now that THAI has canceled its direct flights to Phuket from these two cities, we don't know what we are going to say to the travel agents we will meet there. But this trip was planned long before TG canceled the service, so we still must go through with it.

Even if Australian carriers continue direct flights to Phuket, there is a risk that if they stop, then the only direct flights to Phuket from Australia will be charter flights.

I am really worried that the effect will be disastrous if there are no direct scheduled flights to Phuket from Australia and Japan.

On March 5, we will attend the ITB [world's largest tourism trade show] in Germany and after that we will continue on to Copenhagen and Stockholm to run further promotions there.

We also have plans to go to South Korea, Hong Kong and Russia. These promotional tours will be funded by the Governor's office of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization (*OrBorJor*).

Even if there are no direct flights to Phuket from some major cities, I don't think we can afford to stop our promotional work in those locations. A case in point is Hong Kong, which used

Despite taking part in numerous Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) "roadshows" and other tourism promotion schemes, members of the Phuket Tourist Association (PTA) are now beginning to wonder if all of these efforts are in vain.

Thai Airways International (THAI) has dropped many of its direct flights to Phuket from abroad, making it harder and more time-consuming for tourists to reach Phuket. Worsening the situation further is a reduction in THAI'S Phuket-Bangkok flights and government cuts to the TAT budget for overseas advertising of Phuket. With more than 30,000 hotel rooms on the island, PTA president **Pattanapong Aikvanich** fears for the future of the island's economy should Phuket become a "forgotten" destination.

to be a major year-round source of tourists – when people there could get direct flights.

Hong Kong now has a Disneyland, which is attracting a lot of visitors from [mainland] China and Taiwan. But I think eventually interest in Phuket will return to these markets.

The main sources of tourists to Phuket are South Korea, Australia, Europe and Thailand. We cannot forget Thai tourists, because about 25% of tourists visiting Phuket are from other parts of Thailand.

But we must not stop marketing abroad, either. We received a budget to do roadshows from both the province and *OrBorJor*, but today the TAT budget from central government was cut. If the central government recognized Phuket's impor-

tance as a regional tourism and travel hub, it would not have authorized these budget cuts. There is nothing the TAT office in Phuket can do about the budget cuts, so their policy this year is to stop marketing at conventions.

We discussed the problem with THAI after they cut the Melbourne-Sydney-Phuket route, but they said their load factor, at just 60%, was making them lose about 1-2 million baht per month. We think this is small compared to the number of tourists the flights bring to Phuket and the money they spend here.

In fact, the government should help by giving a marketing budget to the TAT or by providing the airline with a fuel cost subsidy.

We should try and improve our communication, which will be

better than announcing that the route has been canceled by saying, "It's finished."

So far, direct international flights to Phuket that THAI has decided to cancel are from Hong Kong, Sydney-Melbourne, Osaka and some of those from Tokyo. I have heard that THAI plans to stop flights from South Korea in February or March.

I don't understand why THAI has felt it necessary to stop these routes when other airlines can continue to operate them. If THAI cannot run these routes at a profit, they should cede them to a low-cost carrier who can.

My biggest worry is that the Andaman provinces will become a forgotten destination, because when tourists want to travel here – but cannot – they will simply find alternative destinations.



THAI now operates only about 12 to 13 flights per day between Bangkok and Phuket; before the tsunami, they flew about 18. The big problem is that people arriving in Bangkok on international flights must then get a connecting flight if their final destination is Phuket.

This creates major problems when there are not enough flights to Phuket. I got a lot of complaints from people who tell me that they need to book too far in advance and that the flights are always full.

I've seen as many as 40-50 people queued up in Bangkok hoping to get a standby ticket to Phuket over long weekends or during holidays. Maybe these people will just give up on coming here altogether.

On some flights, such as the flight from Japan's Narita International Airport to Phuket, they should try to cut down on the number of direct flights – say from seven per week to three – rather than just axing the route completely.

This is better because the route will be kept alive and it won't be necessary to start from scratch with the travel agents and other parts of the tourism industry when demand increases.

It really is very difficult without direct flights. How would you feel about an enforced three-hour stopover in Manila every time you flew from Phuket to Tokyo?

I wouldn't like it, you probably wouldn't like it and nor would other tourists, but that is what the situation will be if they do away with the direct route.

Why is it so difficult to find books and music by HM the King?

Try as I may, I have been unable to find in Phuket's book or music shops any translations or books (apart from *Tong Daeng*) or music – specifically the jazz compositions of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

I am particularly interested in finding His Majesty's translation of Phyllis Auty's *Tito*, a biography of Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the former Yugoslavian leader.

I had hoped that my lack of success was simply the result of the staff at B2S in Central Festival Phuket not understanding my English, but when I asked a Thai friend to inquire, she was met with similarly blank – yet still smiling – faces, and ordering a book or a CD seemed, as ever, simply too difficult a task for the staff.

William Stephenson
Phuket

Araya Khao-Uthai, Manager of B2S Book shop, Central Festival Phuket replies:

B2S stocks only the *Tong Daeng* book by HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej. There are two versions: a story and a cartoon edition both in Thai and English in the same edition.

Other books in B2S relating to his Royal Highness are written about him and not by him, such as the Thai-language *Bantuk Khong Poh* [Notes of the Father]. We also have CDs featuring music composed by the King.

As regards our staff, we are terribly sorry but almost all of our staff are non-English speakers. However, B2S has a computer program to find editions through a name check search. We hope to start an English training course to ensure our staff provide the best service to our customers.

Issues & ANSWERS

Have a question or an idea for Phuket's authorities or institutions? Submit your queries or suggestions to us and we'll ask the appropriate people.

Write to: The Phuket Gazette, 367/2 Yaowarat Rd, Muang, Phuket 83000. Fax 076-213971, or submit your issue at www.phuketgazette.net

Who is responsible for dangerous 'safety' measures?

It seems that most of the main highways in Phuket have recently had reflective lane markers installed along the middle of the road, ostensibly to aid safe night-time driving.

Unfortunately, these markers are dangerous, especially for motorcyclists, and I am sure they will cause lots of accidents.

I have seen dangerous incidents caused by these objects and I don't want to imagine what will happen in the rainy season, when road conditions get slippery. For car drivers they are very annoying and dangerous, too, as they can damage tires and lead to traffic slowdowns; on narrow roads it has become dangerous to overtake. I wonder how many motorcyclists will have to die before

these reflectors are removed. A reflective non-slip colored central line would have the same desired effect without the dangers.

Who was responsible for these reflective devices, and are they aware, that he/she will be responsible for every dead motorcyclist because of this nonsense? Phuket's roads are dangerous enough; we don't need additional hazards.

George Della Pietra
Phuket

Thanit Sakiya, Chief of Phuket Provincial Highways Office (PPHO) replies:

The main reason we installed reflective lane markers on Phuket's roads is to improve road safety. We want to help drivers

see the lane divisions at night, especially when it's raining. We have never heard of an accident caused by skidding on these markers.

The reflective markers have been installed on the main highway roads following standard safety rules, which is to say in the middle of the road – where motorcycles [and other vehicles] shouldn't normally be. We have engineers who are specifically responsible for accident prevention but we also accept any comments that may be useful in improving road safety. We would also like to encourage all road users to drive safely because – generally – it is not the road but the driver "at fault" when an accident happens.

Mixing with the gene genies

There's exciting news from the wonderful world of science. Biotechnologists are now creating hybrid animals by fusing the embryos of unrelated species. They've already produced a geep – a creature with the head of a goat and the body of a sheep.

They've also injected human brain cells into mouse fetuses, giving us a mouse that is 1% human. Imagine an interview with a mouse that has human brain cells:

Tsow: How do you feel, mouse?

Mouse: How do you think I feel, you imbecile? I want a pizza.

T: Mice don't eat pizza.

M: Mice with human brain cells do. I also want to get out of this cage. Set me up in a condo on Sukhumvit, with maid service, aircon, cable TV and a Jacuzzi. And get me a female mouse for companionship. Better still, get me several. Sexy ones, with large bazongas.

T: You are a very obnoxious and demanding mouse. Immoral, too. We should kill you before you can reproduce.

M: You can't do that, moron, that would be murder. I have human brain cells, after all.

T: It would be only 1% murder because you're only 1% human. Bye-bye, mousie. (Kills mouse).

Even more exciting are the pos-



sibilities for hybrid animals. Here are a just few:

The Dat. Combination of a dog and a cat. Says "Bow-meow". Wags its tail and purrs at the same time. A highly conflicted creature, because cats and dogs hate each other. Is always chasing itself. Scientists want to know what will happen if it catches itself.

The eleroach. A hybrid elephant-cockroach. Scientists are curious to know if it will be as small as a cockroach or as big as an elephant.

If the latter, there could be trouble. How would you like to go into your bathroom and run into a cockroach the size of an elephant? Likes to eat currant buns and live in drainpipes. Often starves to death, because currant buns don't grow in drainpipes.

Nasty possibility in the rainy season when the sewers flood that all the eleroaches would come swarming out. They'd be all wet, mad as hell, and trumpeting furiously as they gore *somtam* vendors with their tusks and

trample on all the Hondas and Toyotas.

The chow. A chicken-cow amalgam. A very productive animal. Gives milk and lays eggs, often at the same time. It is a wondrous spectacle to see the chow go into erotic spasms as eggs come popping out of its backside while you're milking it. The male of the species, called a cooster, crows "Cock-a-doodle-mooooo!"

The bish. Combines the best features of a bird and a fish. Can

both fly and swim. A subspecies, the shargle, bites like a shark and flies like an eagle. Not the kind of feathered friend bird-watchers like to spot.

Mountain climbers can now enjoy the thrill of a shark attack without even going near the water. Skydivers and paragliders will have to take special precautions when shargles are cruising through the air at feeding time.

It would be even better if we could create hybrid humans to achieve world peace:

Thaksin Boonmee. Also known as Thirayuth Shinawatra. A hot-tempered academic. Fabulously wealthy, even though he doesn't teach night courses.

Says things like "According to postmodernist reductionist conceptual constructs, as interpreted by Wittgenstein with a gloss by Derrida, the UN is not my father and the US is a useless friend." Likes to argue with himself.

S. Tsow can be flamed at stsow@yahoo.com, except when he's arguing with himself.

SOME STEARN CRITICISM

I'm going to be as gentle as I can with Duncan Stearn because, as a regular humor columnist, he has a hard row to hoe – or hard yakka as the folks say in his home country of Australia. *Our Man in Pattaya* (Mitrphab Press, Kincumber NSW, 2005, 224pp) is a collection of 53 short, first-person, humor articles he has written for the both this paper and the *Pattaya Mail*.

Now I've filled four books full of first-person, humor stories, but I never had to write them on a schedule. I just waited for a disaster to happen to me, then wrote about it.

I was never faced with the question: what am I going to be funny about this week?

The regular humor columnists in Bangkok – Roger Crutchley at the *Bangkok Post* and S. Tsow at *The Nation* and the *Gazette* – have their good days and their bad days.

The premier American hu-

morist, Dave Barry of the *Miami Herald*, has his good days and his great days. But Dave Barry is possessed by the Devil.

A second problem is Duncan Stearn's subject matter: the sexpats of Pattaya.

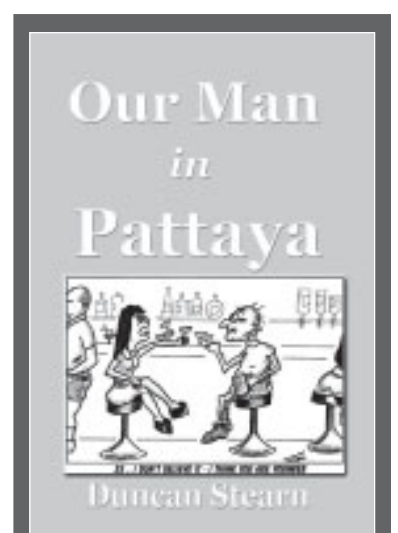
It's hard to see how to wring any more blood from this sleazy stone.

The classic stereotypic couple – beer-bellied, bald, geriatric, dumb white guy and cute tiny Thai girl with a mind like an electronic calculator – has been beaten to death.

So have asides about six-foot-tall *katoeys*. So where does that leave you? Especially if you're Duncan Stearn and you've already written *Pattaya: Patpong on Steroids*; *Pattaya Snaps: A Celebration of the Women of Pattaya*, and *Pattaya Unplugged*.

So I have to say up front that much of the humor in *Our Man in Pattaya* is lame and strained. Hardly any of the stories work as a whole, but Stearn does come up with some gems.

Like many in Pattaya, he has a steady girlfriend but slips in hookers on the side. Cleaning up after a one-night stand, he is horrified to find a tell-tale long black hair on his bathroom floor. This wouldn't seem to be a problem, except that his girlfriend has short hair dyed blonde. His solution? Paint the bathroom floor black.



'Imagine a motley collection of rabid cats let loose in a ceramics shop, pursued by a pack of hungry mongrels wearing army boots'

He is also quick to notice changes in the nightlife scene:

"The girls and boys working in the entertainment industry have embraced Internet technology with a fervour matched only by captains of industry and corporate raiders.

"Walk past any existing Internet Café and you will see a veritable smorgasbord of talent madly tapping away at the keyboards as they send messages of undying love, devotion and bank account details into cyberspace."

He has a proper Aussie contempt for golf fops and wine snobs.



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OUTSIDE

IN

By Lis Kinswoman

This column is dedicated to how the outside world sees Phuket. But this week Lis can't help but set her sights a little wider to announce that Bangkok's Don Muang airport is the sixth most slept-in airport in the world. Yes! There's a website dedicated to tales of people who have slept in airports. It's a whole new world, though not unconnected ... as will be revealed.



Off the SHELF

By James Eckardt

"If you happen to be the man in the green tweed jacket, checked plus fours and wearing a loud Panama hat on the fifth hole at the Coffs Harbour course back in 1993 then I apologise. Somebody told me I should have shouted 'four' ... Believe me when I say I wasn't aiming at you; or at least I didn't think I'd be able to hit you at that distance."

He laments the passing of Pattaya beer bars for more effete wine establishments.

"Not only do some of the local rags carry regular columns about how to guzzle vino without getting your brown paper bag wet, a string of upwardly mobile munching palaces have taken to promoting the value of the grape."

Of the musicians who play at temple fairs, he offers this indelible portrait:

"Imagine a motley collection of rabid cats let loose in a ceramics shop, pursued by a pack of hungry mongrels wearing army boots and you have something approaching the 'sound' made by these alleged 'musicians' ... Oftentimes they sound as if they've been attacked with a succession of cattle prods."

Again and again he returns to the subject of Pattaya bargirl romance.

"I would like to propose a phrase that, if empirical surveys are correct, is uttered by foreign visitors to their sceptical friends and acquaintances here at least five hundred times a night and twice as much on Sundays: 'but she's different'. In Latin, this comes out as caveat emptor, which also means 'empty wallet'."

Deathless literature? No. But take it to the beach.

Weird nights in Don Muang

"July 2003 On 3rd day got chummy with some girl called Wanna doing surveys who also got me some rice in! Spent 3rd night ... at the gay man's house, his idea not mine, it was 3am and i thought why not? fair play he did not try it on but shared a bed.

"Back to the airport for his afternoon shift and met up with a mad Scot who supplied me with as much beer as i could handle so spent 4th night in drunken stupor outside Term 1 smoking fags... Mark xoxoxoxox" (1)

"May 2004 - Had to wait for 7 hours at Bangkok for my connection to LHR. Within 5 minutes of lying on a bench I was pestered by a homosexual baggage handler who made it clear he wanted to handle a little more than my baggage.

"He told me he had slept with a bloke called Mark a few years previously who he had met in the same place, and they had gone back to his place in Bangkok. I spent the remaining 6 hrs 55 mins locked in a toilet (alone). Thank god my flight was on time." (1)

But let's get back to good old Phuket, shall we?

Jai yen yen: "You know that we have said that Thais don't like to get angry because it shows a lack of control and they lose face, hell go to Patong for a night and you will see that tradition fly out the window very quickly.

"In Phuket Town, it is much more Thai and I think much friendlier ... The only thing about Phuket Town that I don't care for is that its a bitch to get around on your own. The streets are like a maze and too many accidents to talk about. (2)

Paradise lots: "If there is a life that's better than the one on

Phuket, I'd like to see it... I hadn't seen so many blond-haired, blue-eyed people in one place since that Walmart in Utah ... Phuket is the place to go.

"If you want to hit some hoping [sic], beachside night-life, Phuket is your place. If you want to relax in a quiet beach town, go to Phuket. If you want to stay in an expensive resort, try Phuket. If you want to stay at a cheap place near the beach, Phuket.

"Phuket just has it all. Everything except its tourist industry back. (3)

A fair cop: "Every time I throw a piece of rubbish away in Thailand I have got six cops on my backside demanding a 1,000 baht fine (including this holiday) but when I need a cop to help me there is never any to be found.

"Eventually I found a police officer directing traffic on the other side of Patong beach and to my surprise he dropped everything and came to rescue immediately.

"He spoke reasonable English and he explained on the way back to the hire operator that the police spent far too much time dealing with these unscrupulous hire operators who constantly ripped off the tourists.

"He went on to say that if tourists kept getting ripped off then they would not come back to Phuket. I couldn't believe what I was hearing and I thought I was

on another planet or perhaps in a parallel universe where things actually happen the way they should in Thailand and people actually give a s**t about one another." (4)

The Peril of the Andaman: Ever get the feeling that some people are dyed-in-the-wool drama queens? "Ignoring the red flag and our previous warning, we waded up to our knees in the clear, warm Andaman Sea.

"About sixty feet away, ten-foot waves heaved, curled, and crashed. Slightly diminished, the white caps broke around and over us, pounding us with a roiling turmoil of froth and fury, before hissing in retreat and launching another attack.

"After enduring a number of assaults, we made our way back to the beach on rubbery legs, feeling as if we had just completed an energetic workout. The smile of the ever-vigilant lifeguard did not [conceal] his feelings regarding the foolishness of two in-trepid tourists...

"After negotiating the fare, we left Patong... and bounced and sputtered into the blackness of the sultry night, our lives in the hands of a speed demon, ever grinning tuk-tuk." (5)

The "smile of the ever-vigilant lifeguard" was in all likelihood the result of a deep confusion as to why farang are so myopic that they cannot see red flags

along the beach and - forgive my cynicism, but the tuk-tuk driver was probably grinning because he'd just made a killing from a would-be Paul Theroux.

More perils of wisdom: "...he warned us that diving was not ideal right now because of the stormy conditions and that a ferry had gone down yesterday trying to get from Phuket to a smaller island in the area.

"This was just 10 min after a dive operator had tried to convince us to go diving the next day ... a real entrepreneur has disaster T-shirts, highlighting all the problems Thailand has had with tourism over the last few years... Bomb scare 2001, Bird Flu 2002, SARS 2003, and Tsunami 2004.

"He asks, 2005 ??????.. I don't think I want to know or be around for whatever it is." (6)

The Land of Frowns? "A couple weeks back I applied for my new Aussie passport (I WAS an American but immigrated to Oz on the eve of Bush's election) and they rejected my photo - because I was smiling!

"Turns out they use biometrics to scan the shape and proportions of your face and a smile totally throws it all off. So in the future Thai immigration can expect to see a lot of glum faced Aussies arriving. More than usual anyway." (7)

1. sleepinginairports.net
2. mensasia.com/Travel/Thailand/Phuket/Phukettown
3. basmati.blogspot.com/
4. stickmanbangkok.com/reader/reader1017
5. thingsasian.com/goto_article/article.1080
6. traveldiary.stracke.us/archives/2005/03/07/tsunami-area-phuketpatong-beach-thailand/
7. stickmanbangkok.com/Weekly/weekly224

'I couldn't believe what I was hearing and I thought I was on another planet or perhaps in a parallel universe where things actually happen the way they should in Thailand and people actually give a s**t about one another.'

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Q&A**

Freaking out Over Firewalls

Q Norton Internet Security was included free when I bought my new computer, but I have two problems with it.

First, Norton Firewall keeps bugging me about allowing programs to connect to the Internet. Second, it keeps asking me for money.

Do I really need the firewall? Should I succumb to Norton's demands that I pay for a "free" program?

JM
Bangkok

A Norton Internet Security covers several important bases, but there are programs that are just as good, are not nearly as obtrusive, and don't have a habit of demanding filthy lucre every 90 days.

Every Windows computer that's connected to the Internet needs an anti-virus program, an anti-spyware program and a firewall. Period. No exceptions.

For an anti-virus program, I recommend – and use – AVG Free Edition from Grisoft.

As long as you're using AVG Free in your home, and not for a commercial enterprise, it's absolutely free.

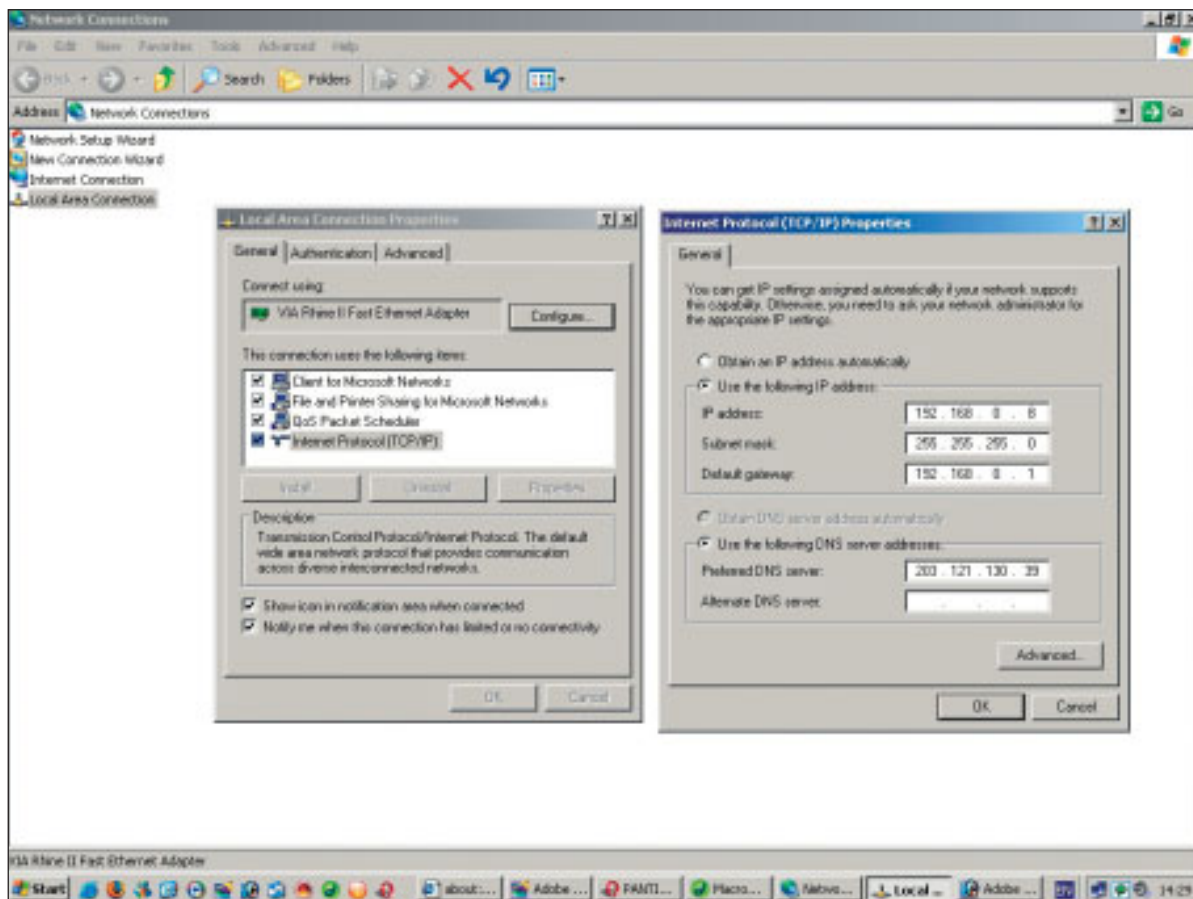
Grisoft makes its money with licenses for companies and organizations. Download it from <http://free.grisoft.com>

For an anti-spyware program, I recommend Microsoft's free (yes, you read that correctly) AntiSpyware, which is currently available at www.microsoft.com/athome/security/spyware/software/default.mspx.

Microsoft is in the process of developing AntiSpyware into a new product called Windows Defender, and bundling it with (decidedly not free) protection packages. So get it free while you can.

Finally, the firewall built into Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2) works fine, as far as it goes. If you have Windows XP and you aren't running SP2, you're playing with fire. Run – don't walk – to update.microsoft.com and go through all the steps necessary to get up to date.

The SP2 firewall works only one way: it only keeps the



DODGING THE DUMMIES: Go here to sort out the 'frozen browser' problem with TOT ADSL lines.

bad guys out of your system. Advanced firewalls block potentially problematic programs that try to reach out from your machine and get onto the Internet. The SP2 firewall doesn't do that. Windows Vista, the next version of Windows due out late this year, does have a two-way firewall.

You want a two-way firewall so that you'll be warned if a malicious program has already taken hold of your computer. Look for a free solution such as ZoneAlarm (www.zonelabs.com).

Q I just installed a new computer, hooked it up to my TOT ADSL line, and it doesn't work.

Actually, I can get to most

websites, but as soon as I try to log on to eBay, Hotmail, Gmail or PayPal, the computer just freezes.

The same thing happens when I try to submit my credit card information to Amazon to buy a book, or to thaiair.com to buy an airplane ticket.

My old computer worked fine. What am I doing wrong?

RM
Patong

A This bug has been about for nearly a year and TOT still hasn't solved the problem.

Worse still, TOT tech support still won't communicate by email and every time you call them you are put through to a person who is new to your same old problem, and because there is no "client history" record, you get to start all over from scratch each time you call.

Every Internet Service Provider, including TOT, is respon-

sible for setting up a computer called a Domain Name Server (DNS).

The DNS translates Web addresses you and I can understand (say, www.phuketgazette.net) into numbers that the Internet can understand (a so-called "IP Address", in this case, 203.146.21.166).

I don't know why, but the DNS that TOT uses for some of its customers doesn't work with "secure" Web sites, such as Amazon.com or thaiair.com or SCBEasy.com, that need to establish secure connections with your computer.

I had that problem for almost a year – and dozens of phone calls to TOT in Bangkok didn't solve a thing.

I finally found the trick. I called the local TOT installation folks and had them re-install the ADSL line. When they left, I went snooping and was astounded to find that they had over-written the

main DNS setting on my computer.

I changed all the other computers on my network, and voila! suddenly – after months of trying to get the problem solved via TOT tech support in Bangkok – it all worked.

Here's how to tell if you have the same problem. Start your favorite Web browser and go to Hotmail (www.hotmail.com).

If you have a Hotmail account, log in with your ID. If you don't have a Hotmail account, follow the instructions on that page to sign up for one.

If you get all the way through to the main Hotmail page – that is, if you can read and create email messages – breathe a sigh of relief. You don't have this particular problem.

If you can't get through – if your browser just sits there at some point, frozen, lost in space – here's how to fix things. Note, this isn't official TOT advice. It's just a hack that worked for me.

Click Start | Control Panel | Network and Internet Connections | Network Connections. Right-click on either Local Area Connection if you have a hard-wired connection, or Wireless Network Connection if you connect to the Internet via wireless.

At the bottom of the middle box you'll see an entry that says Internet Protocol TCP/IP.

Click once on that line, then click Properties. You'll see a dialog box that looks like the one pictured on this page.

Click the button marked Use the Following DNS Server Addresses, then type these four numbers in the box for Preferred DNS Server: 203 121 130 39

Click OK twice. It'll take a while for your computer to digest the new settings, but when you're done, you should be able to get onto any secure site.

Blame the folks at TOT in Bangkok. They're clueless.

Woody can be contacted by sending email to him at woody@khunwoody.com.

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ON THE MOVE



Phuket native **Nivit Aroonrat**, 54, is the new Phuket Provincial Chief Administrative Officer (*Palad*). K. Nivit has a law degree from Ramkhamhaeng University and a master's degree in public and private management from the National Institute of Development Administration. His experience includes serving as District Chief in seven provinces, the last before moving to Phuket being a two-year stint in Lumlukka District, Pathum Thani Province.



Gregory Anderson, 50, from Sydney, Australia, has been appointed General Manager of Le Meridien Khao Lak Beach Resort & Spa. Mr Anderson, who has an arts degree from his native Australia, has worked with Le Meridien for seven years. Before taking up his position in Khao Lak, Mr Anderson was Area Director of Sales and Marketing at the Plaza Athenée Bangkok, which is a Royal Meridien hotel, and at Le Meridien Angkor in Cambodia.



Chantana Jasper, 31, a Thai national born in Georgia, USA, has joined ArtAsia Press as Staff Writer and Assistant Editor of *Phuket Magazine*. K. Chantana has a degree in political science from North Carolina State University in the US. She has worked as Marketing Associate and Commissioned Reporter for the City of Sarasota, in Florida, USA, and as Media Coordinator and as Publicity Director for the US Army, based in Hanau, Germany. Before joining ArtAsia Press she was Web Content Editor for Insitiful Web Services in Chiang Mai.

No sign of takeoff for Phuket-Haad Yai air service

By Gazette Staff

PHUKET: Following disastrous losses in 2004 and 2005, Phuket Air laid off over 300 staff between April and end-August 2005. Phuket's namesake carrier also closed its offices in Phuket, Krabi and Haad Yai and, in October, suspended its daily service between the island and Haad Yai.

Phuket Air's abandonment of the Phuket-Haad Yai (HKT-HDY) service, which had used aging 64-seat YS11 aircraft from Japan, was only the latest in a string of such cancellations of the route between the two international airports.

Businessman trying to avoid a six-hour drive between the two cities – or a nine-hour bus journey – now find themselves having to fly all the way to Bangkok and then south to Haad Yai, coming back the same way.

Haad Yai-based travel agent Raju Sharma, who has an office and coordinates visa runs to Penang, where Sharma Travel's main office is located, told the

Gazette, "My Phuket customers are not happy about there not being a flight here," he said.

He said there have been rumors that Thai AirAsia was negotiating to take over the route and was only waiting for final approval.

The *Gazette* was unable to confirm this with Thai AirAsia. The legality of that carrier's existing domestic routes came under question recently, when majority control of the carrier fell into foreign hands with the controversial sale of Thai AirAsia's parent company, Shin-Corp, to the Singaporean government's Temasek investment arm.

Other airlines appear uninterested in the route.

Kalayapha Panich, Phuket-based District Sales Manager for Upper-Southern Thailand of Thai Airways International (THAI), said that THAI had no plans to resurrect its HDY-HKT service.

"I think the main reason that we stopped it years ago is that it is a short distance and the load

factor doesn't justify it," she said.

A public relations officer at Nok Air, the low-cost carrier majority-owned by THAI, said on condition of anonymity that her airline, too, had no plans to take over the route.

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket Office Region 4 Director, Suwalai Pinpradab, said that reestablishing air service between the two cities would support the TAT's strategy of bringing in more low-season tourists from Malaysia and Indonesia.

"Not having this service does make it harder for visitors from Malaysia and even Medan in Indonesia to travel to Haad Yai and then get a connecting flight here.

"Accessibility is a major factor in tourism growth. I think the flight would really support tourism as the number of Malaysian visitors would triple if they were able to fly here via Haad Yai," she said.

Phuket Tourist Association President Pattanapong Aikwanich noted that Malaysians could

still fly direct to Phuket on the existing Kuala Lumpur-Phuket flight. The absence of a HKT-HDY route affected business travel more than tourism, he said.

"I won't go on a business trip to Haad Yai unless it's really urgent, because it means I have to drive there. Haad Yai is the major commercial area of lower southern of Thailand, just as Phuket is for the upper South.

"The HKT-HDY flight was one of the first [non-Bangkok] domestic routes in Thailand. It's unbelievable that there is no air service between the two cities," he said.

"We have heard nothing about another carrier taking over this route, but if it happens it will certainly be good," he added.

Phuket Airport Director Sq/Ldr Pornchai Eua-aree, formerly Director of Haad Yai Airport, told the *Gazette* that he had already checked with many carriers about taking over the route, only to get the same answer: there is not sufficient demand to operate the route at a profit.

"There is demand for flights but not enough to cover costs," he said. Other airlines that have flown the route [THAI, Bangkok Airways, Andaman Air and Phuket Air] have never managed to make a profit on it. I think they should consider a Bangkok-Phuket-Haad Yai route," he said.

The Aviation Department is keen to see a carrier take over the route and would accept offers from any interested carrier, he added.

One company that would appear to benefit from the lack of a HKT-HDY air link is Sri-trang Tour Co, which operates eight air-conditioned coaches daily between the two cities.

However, Sri-trang Managing Director Waluree Wiprakasit said she had not noticed any rise in passenger numbers since the cancellation of Phuket Air's HKT-HDY service.

"Almost all our passengers are local people. Some are students studying in Haad Yai and others are patients traveling to the Prince of Songkhla University Hospital. We don't get many businessmen using our service ... for those who do want to travel between the two cities I think it's a lot faster for them to do it by flying via Bangkok," she said.



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Coming in from the cold



MONEY TALKS

By Richard Watson



The downside of Russia is that President Vladimir Putin and the political leadership, despite being labeled as democratic in the media, places limits on personal freedom, and displays dictatorial tendencies. But there is also plenty of upside. – Photo by EPA/Sergei Chirikov.

To most people, Russia would have no appeal for their investment capital or any part of it. For others in search of outstanding returns, it still offers enormous attractions.

There are various ways that an investor can have a stake in Russia, from diluted versions of the BRIC concept – a fund that invests in Brazil, Russia, India and China – which have been featured in this column before. Previously, I mentioned BRIC in reference to HSBC's fund. However, BRIC is also being used as an investment block by Goldman Sachs and others. It seems that the BRIC concept will soon be featured on many fund managers "available" list.

The other highly profitable approach has been an Eastern European approach, which includes Russia. Investment groups such as Thames River Capital have delivered gains of around 300% over the past five years in their Eastern European funds.

However, for any investor who wants Russia as a direct investment destination for part of a portfolio, there are several choices.

The largest foreign portfolio investor in Russia is Hermitage Capital Management.

Its investment started in 1994, so, in terms of Russian investment history, it was one of the pioneers. Since then, Hermitage Capital has turned every US\$1

into US\$18. Their investment more than doubled in 2005 alone.

At the recent World Economic Forum – held annually in Davos, Switzerland – the CEO of Hermitage Capital, Bill Browder, who was there to address this body on Russian investment, also gave interviews to the media.

He outlined his view of Russia as evolving, from 1994, as a place of absolute and total chaos to one of plain chaos. Much of Browder's audience consisted of the CEOs of large multinationals interested in investing in Russia. He promised that they would succeed in Russia only by "rolling up their sleeves".

"Why Russia?" many investors may well ask. There are many reasons for and many against. To start with the latter; the rule of law is not firmly entrenched and the political leadership, despite being labeled as democratic in the media, places limits on personal freedom, and displays tendencies akin to a dictatorship.

On the plus side, Russia has "never had it so good". World commodity prices have, generally, skyrocketed and Russia has a lot more than most in these fields. Gold, diamonds, platinum, bauxite, coal, oil, natural gas and more can be found in profusion in Russia. Russia sits above possibly the

greatest treasure trove in the world.

Russia, via its state-controlled Gazprom entity, is negotiating with Norway's state-controlled Statoil to exploit a new oil and natural gas field in the Barents Sea. It is estimated that this area contains at least 40 billion barrels of the stuff.

Russia received negative publicity for its recent handling of the Ukrainian natural gas pipeline, which also reaches through Ukraine to Western Europe.

They insisted that Ukraine would have to pay the normal market price for natural gas. Ukraine's new ruling political party favors closer ties with the European Union at the expense of its historical ties with Russia.

The result was that Russia insisted on market prices for its natural gas as opposed to the 75% discount Ukraine had enjoyed for the previous 15 years. Russia won the contest, but only after bitter animosity.

Russia has forged better ties with some important countries. For decades, relations with China were sour but they have now turned 180 degrees. Both countries have a strong vested interest in trade links; China needs Russia's natural resources and Russia wants the revenue for its own development. The relationship now includes joint military exercises. Russia's offer to enrich Iran's uranium in Russia itself may defuse the tension that currently exists.

On the investment front, the Russian stock market currently trades at a price/earning ratio (PE) of around 11.2; this, by Russian historical standards, is not cheap. Normally, because of political and legal concerns, Russia has single digit PE ratios.

When compared with Europe, with a PE of around 13.5, to the US at 15 and with Japan at 18, it still offers value.

The decision to invest in Russia rests entirely with the individual. But it is an interesting alternative.

One of the more interesting media interviews at the World Economic Forum was with the Indian Foreign Minister.

This took place against a background where, in 2006, the focus of the forum moved, to a substantial extent, to the effects of Chinese and Indian economic growth on the future of the world.

The Indian Foreign Minister emphasized how manufacturing was to be a substantial part of the Indian economy, in addition to the fact that India is introducing economic reforms on a daily basis.

He also added that India and China have agreed to bid, on a joint basis, for oil and gas concessions around the world. Trade between the two countries has boomed over the past decade and political relationships have improved immeasurably.

India's central bank, the Reserve Bank, expects economic growth of 7.5% to 8% this year. Many economists are predicting that it will reach 10% a year within three years.

The center of economic gravity is changing at an astonishing pace.

Richard Watson runs Global Portfolios Co Ltd, a Phuket-based personal financial planning service. He can be reached at Tel and Fax: 076-381997, Mobile: 01-081-4611. Email: imm@loxinfo.co.th

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Upset fails to knock Amigos off top perch

PATONG: In Week 7 play of the Patong Darts League, Dog's Bollocks upset Amigos on the road with a 7-2 drubbing of the boys from Soi Sea Dragon. Amigos salvaged a point by winning the beer leg to remain at the top of the table with 17 points.

In other results, Piccadilly won their fourth straight 3-points win to move into a three-team tie for second place with Queen Mary and Didi's, all three tied on 15 points.

Perhaps the biggest achievement of all is that, with the league one-third through, all matches have been played on schedule apart from the ones involving Winchester.

It seems that the idea to impose a "lost business" fee on teams who fail to show up for their road games may really be working.

February 7 results: Winchester 0 Shakers* 9 (walk-over); Amigos* 2 Dog's Bollocks 7; Piccadilly* 5 Valhalla 4; The Boss Bar* 4 Didi's 5; Coyote Bar* 8 Two Black Sheep 1; Offshore 5 Queen Mary* 4. (* winner of beer leg)

Standings: 1. Amigos (17 pts); 2.= Queen Mary, Piccadilly, Didi's (15); 5.= Dog's Bollocks, Valhalla (13); 7. OffShore (12); 8. Shakers (11); 9. Coyote Bar (8); 10.= The Boss Bar, Two Black Sheep (3); 12. Winchester (1).

February 21 fixtures: Dog's Bollocks v Valhalla; Amigos v OffShore; Shakers v Two Black Sheep; Piccadilly v Queen Mary; The Boss Bar v Winchester; Coyote Bar vs Didi's. (Home teams first.)

CONFIDENCE TRICK

Any top golfer will tell you that it's not a perfect golf swing that makes a good player. If the truth be known, many professionals on the PGA Tour have golf swings that are less than textbook.

Colin Montgomerie and Jim Furyk are two names that come to mind. They don't possess great golf swings, yet they remain world-class players.

A big difference between the average golfer and the world-class player is what goes through their minds when playing golf. Fact: if the average golfer went onto the course with a more positive attitude, then they would play better golf. Most golfers prepare for disaster. Great golfers prepare for success.

STARVATION

I would say that golf is 80% mental. Sure, you need to grip the golf club correctly – and the way I see some golfers holding the club, I'm surprised they make any contact with the ball. If they held their knife and fork the same way as they grip a golf club, they would starve to death.

So a good grip and a good set up is important. A golf swing which is a "turn back and turn through the ball" will be far more consistent than a swing which is all hands and arms.

A good short game is required; the rest is all in the mind. The way you think on a golf course is what the end result will be. If you go out there thinking

TEE TIME

By David Holloway

DAVID HOLLOWAY, born in the Midlands, England – but now a golfing citizen of the world – is a successful PGA Tour Professional, having turned professional at age 17, undertaking four years of study and sitting the PGA Training exams to become a fully-qualified professional.

David admits that life on the Tour means that home tends to be a hotel and a suitcase, although he is relatively settled in Phuket for the next few months as he readies himself for the rigors of the 2006 PGA Tour. In this, the first in a series of articles, David explains how the right mental approach to the game can make all the difference.



you're going to play badly, then nine times out of 10 this is what will happen. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. If you stand on the tee, and picture your ball landing in the water or going out of bounds, there's a good chance it will.

So how do you go about changing the way you think? The first thing to accept is that this change will not happen overnight. You need to train your mind to having positive thoughts on the golf course.

For example, picture yourself standing on the tee. "That's an out-of-bounds on the right", you think to yourself. Your immediate thought, quite naturally, is, "Don't hit it there." However, doing this focuses the mind on that direction, making it more likely that that is where the ball will go.

What you must do is pick a spot where you want the ball to go, the middle of the fairway for example. Play the shot in your mind just once, visualizing your golf ball flying down the middle of the fairway. Then address your

ball, take one more look at the middle of the fairway, and pull the trigger.

Do this with every shot, even when you're around the green. On a pitch or chip shot, look at the spot where you want your ball to land, play the shot in your mind – again, do this just once – and visualize your ball landing on that spot and rolling into the hole, then go up to your ball and go through the same routine.

POSITIVE

Using this method on every golf shot will result in you playing golf in a much more positive way. Your scores will improve and you will find it's much more fun playing this way.

Golf really is a game of confidence, and when it's low, your game can be hard work. I have seen golfers in the Top 10 of the world rankings give up the game – all because of a lack of confidence.

One story that comes to

mind is that of Australian pro golfer Ian Baker-Finch. In 1991, he won the British Open Championship shooting 64 and 66 on the final two days. He was a great player – and a gentleman – and was well liked by his fellow competitors on the tour.

After winning the British Open, he started to make a few changes to his golf swing to try and hit the ball a little further. He planned to play on the US Tour, and because the golf courses in the US are longer compared with Europe, he felt he needed that extra length off the tee.

The changes that he made to his swing worked and he started to hit the ball longer, but also a lot wilder. He became very erratic off the tee, which showed in his scores. He then went a straight 32 tournaments without collecting a pay check.

He decided to go back to his old swing, the one that had won him the British Open – and over a million dollars in prize money.

NIGHTMARE

But his swing just did not feel right. He started seeing different golf coaches, 12 of them to be precise, and they all told him much the same thing. They agreed that his swing looked good, that he was hitting the ball great on the range, but as soon as he went out onto the golf course, he just didn't know which direction the ball was going to go. The bigger the tournament was, the worse it got.

It was not his swing which was the problem, it was his confidence. More to the point, it was his lack of it. He was having a nightmare out on the course, but he kept battling away, trying somehow to find his game again.

But it just got worse. In the 1997 British Open, Ian Baker-Finch was having one of his worst rounds of golf and was quite literally all over the place. He returned a first round score of 92, which was 20 over par. It was one of the highest scores ever recorded at The Open by a professional.

Ian came off the 18th green and headed for the locker room, where he broke down in tears. He later said, "I felt like I was walking naked, like the grass was taller than me. I tried to walk with my head high. [But] It was really hard."

At just 35 years of age and at what should have been the height of his career, he decided to finish playing golf.

The next time you go out for a game of golf, remember that it is just a game, and every minute of it should be enjoyed. As the great Ben Hogan said, "Take time to smell the flowers."

Comments and questions can be sent direct to David Holloway at Email: davidholloway@golfinglife.com



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Rebak Champagne Run canceled

LANGKAWI: The Rebak Champagne Run, the overnight yacht race from Phuket to Langkawi traditionally held on the eve of the annual Royal Langkawi International Regatta (RLIR), was aborted for the first time in its four-year-history.

Tony Knight, of the Ao Chalong Yacht Club (ACYC), which organizes the Champagne Run, explained, "The RLIR was moved forward, not by just a day but by nearly a month [to February 11-17], which made it very difficult for us to organize the Champagne Run so quickly after the Phang Nga Bay Regatta.

"They [could not have expected] 50 boats to be in the Phang Nga Bay Regatta, now officially recognized as the second-largest regatta in Asia, and then have expected them to be down there 10 days later. Their numbers will have been down this year because of it."

A disappointed Mr Knight also explained that the Champagne Run trophy is a "perpetual cup", on which the name of the winning boat each year is inscribed, and from which the omission of a 2006 winner will remain.

However, he added, "After the

ACYC annual meeting [set for early April] we'll be talking to them and hopefully we can make both events bigger and better."

Mr Knight also announced that the first race of the ACYC Keelboat and Multihull Race Series 2006 will be held on March 5, with the rest of the series to be held on the following dates: March 19, April 2, April 16, June 4, June 18, July 2, July 16, August 13, August 27, October 1, October 15, October 29, November 12 and November 26.

He explained that this year's race series has been organized so as to allow

local yachts to compete in other regattas in the region. "For example, there will be no ACYC races in May, so local yachts can race in the Top of the Gulf Regatta and the Koh Samui Regatta," he said.

The presentation night for this year's series will be held on Friday, December 1.

Mr Knight added that on every second Sunday starting March 12, the ACYC will have three Optimist dinghies available to introduce children to sailing.

"We would like to encourage parents to bring their kids out for a day sailing," he said.

Patong down BCIS, lose narrowly to Island CC

KOH KAEW: Patong batted first on February 11 against a BCIS team slightly weakened due to a few absentees because of half-term holidays.

Absenteeism notwithstanding, Patong were once again in trouble early when Willy Kerr was run out without facing a ball and three wickets followed soon after, leaving Patong on 37 for 4 after 11 overs.

Brown (73 runs) was then joined by Henry (28 not out) and these two led a recovery to take Patong to 175 all out off 34 overs.

Catts (10 overs, 2 for 39) and Millward (9 overs, 1 for 43) continued their good form with the new ball but it was Weston (6.3 overs, 4 for 43) who looked the most impressive with his medium-paced in-swing. Meyer (9 overs, 2 for 48) also bowled well.

The pitch produced more consistent bounce than in previous games and 175 was less than Patong would have liked. However, BCIS's reply was going to be a battle with only nine players to bat.

Meyer (78 runs) led from the front and once again showed some aggressive hitting with 9 fours and 3 sixes. He got some

support from Weston (17 runs) but sadly it was only a matter of time after he was out before Patong took the wickets they needed to win. All the bowlers chipped in with Williams the pick of them with 3 for 23.

Rain stops play: The following day, Patong went straight into another match, this time against league leaders Island CC.

This was the last match in Round 1 of the league and would decide who finished on top at the halfway stage.

Patong won the toss and, interestingly, asked ICC to bat in extremely warm conditions. Perhaps this was not so much gamesmanship but necessity: a number of their players had been celebrating their previous day's win at their sponsors, The Aussie Bar, the night before.

ICC duly put them to the sword and amassed 256 for 6 off their 40 overs. Vicky Mehra scored an excellent 88 not out and found great support from Annand with 41 and Raju Pandey with a quick fire 46 at the end. All the bowlers seemed to suffer in the heat, the only exception being Williams, who bowled 10 overs

of fine off-spin, returning figures of 1 for 49.

The score of 256 was a big – although not impossible – challenge. Unfortunately, Patong found themselves at 51 for 5 after 14 overs and victory was looking particularly unlikely. However, this brought Jason Phillips (53 not out) to join Brown (60 not out) and these two started to build a recovery taking Patong to 163 before the heavens opened and everyone ran for the pavilion.

The pitch was soon waterlogged and play had to be canceled. This meant that the result was decided on total runs scored by each side after 28 overs. Patong had reached 163 but ICC just pipped them because they had scored 165 at the same stage of their innings. – *Rich Brown*

LEAGUE TABLE

1. **Island CC** Played 3, won 3, 49 points;
2. **Patong CC** Played 3, won 2, 41 points;
3. **BCIS CC** Played 3, won 1, 28 points;
4. **Kamala Beer Garden CC** Played 3, won 0, 10 points.

Phuket dominate soft tennis

PHUKET CITY: Phuket natives and Thai national squad members Pakorn Niyom-adul and Sakan Tansiroj led the charge as Phuket players won five of 12 categories in the the first round of the Thailand Soft Tennis Championship 2006, held at Saphan Hin from February 11-13.

Pakorn and Sakan both won all their matches on the way to the open men's singles final, in which Pakorn beat Sakan 4-1.

The pair were also the under-20s men's singles finalists, with Sakan beating Pakorn 4-1.

Sakan and his brother Itti beat Bangkok duo Krit Jantira and Notthapol Hathong 5-3 to win the open men's doubles, after losing to fellow Phuketians Pakorn and Permyot Tansakul in the under-20 men's doubles.

In the under-16 women's doubles, Phuket girls Pitchakorn Kankanok and Chayanit Kongkaew beat Vethaka Kaewkam and Napanan Yomjinda from Chon Buri.

The dates and venue of the second round have yet to be announced.

Island to host Seaba Cup

PHUKET CITY: Phuket will host the 6th Southeast Asian Basketball Association's women's championship – the Seaba CUP – in August.

The Seaba Cup, with a standard of play equivalent to that of the SEA Games, is held every two years among SEA member states Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Thailand.

In the 5th Seaba Cup women's championship, played in

September 2004, Thailand came second, behind host Singapore.

The competition will be organized jointly by the Basketball Association of Thailand, Phuket Basketball Club, Phuket Provincial Administration Organization and the Sports Authority of Thailand.

All games will be played in Gymnasium 1 of the Saphan Hin Sports Complex. Dates and times of matches will be announced later.

RETRACTION: The Phuket Cricket League (PCL) would like to point out that comments in the article supplied to and printed in the *Gazette* of February 4, regarding a school punishment being given to two British Curriculum International School (BCIS) students, were incorrect. The PCL apologizes to BCIS for this erroneous report.

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Gardening

with Bloomin' Bert

Westerners are coddled. Well, they are nowadays anyway. "During the war," my long-departed grandmother used to say, "people in Britain were healthier than they'd ever been" (*Unless they had just been blown up by a V-1 doodlebug* - Ed.).

And she was right. They didn't have fast food or pretty much anything that was processed or packaged in any way. (*Apart from spam* - Ed.)

Today, we have a McDonald's or KFC on virtually every street corner - and not just in the west; these insidious establishments have diversified their operations into the rest of the world. How many McDonald's are there in Phuket now? I've already lost count of the KFCs.

I don't think it any coincidence that if you go up to Isarn - a quiet, relatively undeveloped area in the northeast of Thailand - that everyone there seems to be the antithesis of my girth; they're all slim. Why? Maybe it's because the KFC mentality hasn't quite made it up there yet. I have the feeling that the residents of Isarn are still eating what they've been eating for centuries - including cats if the popular music video *phu bao kin maew* is to be believed - and they seem to be doing very well on it.

Back to my World War II ancestors, who were in a similar state of health at the time. They survived, very successfully, by consuming whatever they could find locally; whatever grew around them. There's nothing to stop more of us developing this approach here. Maybe a few more natural foods would do us

Oddly, it does grow on trees

all good. This is getting scary now - I'm starting to sound like one of those pale-skinned macrobiotic types.

There are dozens of edible plants that grow around us in southern Thailand, both in gardens and tropical forests. Rural villagers still use this bounty, even here in Phuket, so why shouldn't we? In case you feel the urge to do something healthy (hang on, I'll put down my beer), here is a brief selection of some of the many plants available.

Bauhinia: The young shoots and leaves of the plant are used in soups and curries. It's dead easy to spot, as the two-lobed leaves look like camel toe, which is why it is also known as the camel's foot tree. The bauhinia is also a medicinal plant - the bark is used to soothe mucus membranes and apparently it's also a "cure" for dysentery. If you're stuck for something to tie things together, the fibrous bark can also be used to make rope.

Colubrina: This insignificant-looking bush grows very happily along coastlines. The seeds are buoyant and they tolerate salt



The lotus can provide physical sustenance as well as fulfilling more spiritual needs.

quite well. Locals cook it on top of steamed fish. This versatile tropical plant can be used for food, medicine and even as a soap substitute. It's sometimes called the latherleaf as it creates a lather when rubbed vigorously. No comment.

Star gooseberry: Though this small evergreen tree probably originated in Madagascar, it is found all over southern Thailand today. The fruit is particularly sour. The seeds make it difficult to eat, yet some villagers make a kind of chutney out of it. The young leaves are also edible. It can even be used as a skin treatment to relieve fever and for treating measles. Allegedly.

Kapok tree: The flowers of this useful tree are edible. They are used in curries for flavor and to

add some color. The roots are used as a diuretic and as a skin softener - certainly an odd combination.

The bark is useful for treating diarrhea and dysentery. The sap that comes from under the bark can stop bleeding (Thai tobacco is also reputed to be very good at stopping bleeding, by the way). The flowers help soothe burns. Most importantly, the cottony contents of the seed pod are excellent stuffing for making mattresses and pillows.

Lotus: Bizarrely, this important plant in Thai religion is also used as a popular snack food. The seeds, hidden in those weird-looking pods that look like shower heads, are eaten raw, or made into sweets in the form of cakes, candies and syrups. The young leaves are edible, as are the roots.

Nitta tree: This tree, common in the tropical jungles of southern Thailand comes into seed in the early summer. It's called *sataw* in Thai. Thais from all walks of life crave these seeds despite the fact that they give you incredibly bad breath. I actually like the taste of *sataw*, but I'm less enthusiastic about the fact that you can still taste them 24 hours later.

The young leaves are edible, but it's the seeds that people really go for. They dip them, raw or roasted, in chili paste and cook them in curries; spicy pork curry is a favorite. If you're married, eating this stuff as a couple will make the following day easier for both of you.

Piperaceae: This pepper family leaf grows close to the ground. A popular Thai snack called *miang kam* uses these leaves. You take a leaf, form it into a sort of bowl-shape, then sprinkle with roasted coconut, ginger, small purple onions, a sweet syrup, peanuts and, inevitably, chilies.

Each crunchy bite is an explosion of different flavors. *Miang kam* is one of the most amazing culinary experiences possible, but you'll definitely need some instruction in how to put these things together.

Apparently, the entire plant helps you "expel gas", whatever that means. I'm not sure that I would choose to consume something that I knew would make me fart (can I say "fart" in a gardening column?), but traditional Thais swear by it. If you have a toothache, crush the roots and leaves, sprinkle on some salt, and rub into the offending molar. This plant seems to do everything.

Another plant that deserves a mention is the cashew - a weirdo in itself. More on that one in the coming weeks.

You don't need to go on a healthfood-crazed binge to enjoy the local plant fare. I would go so far as to say that a polite Heineken is a perfect accompaniment to *miang kam*. In fact, I rather think it's lunchtime.

Want to know more about a plant in your garden?

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Head for the hills! Or at least the waterfall!

They're suddenly everywhere on Phuket: blue-and-white signs with a picture of a wave, stating "tsunami hazard area" or "tsunami evacuation route."

Security is important to people in Phuket, visitors and residents alike. We like to feel secure from thieves, road accidents, falling stars and tsunamis. Especially tsunamis. It did happen here, so it's necessary for one's peace of mind to know that there is a warning system in place.

But wouldn't it be better if the services warning us about tsunamis – such as signs advising us where to go in case of an approaching a tsunami – were placed in areas that would be affected.

It's hardly likely that Ao Por on the northeast coast of Phuket, or Cape Yamu, also on the northeast coast, would face a tsunami – unless a volcano happened to erupt in the middle of Phang Nga Bay or an earthquake occurred in Krabi, in which case the resulting tsunami would be the least of our problems given that Phang Na Bay is only a few metres deep.

The chances of a devastating tsunami occurring on the east coast of Phuket are almost nil. Yet signs are posted there, reading "You are entering a tsunami danger area".

Seismologists said it was unlikely the Indian Ocean region would be hit any time soon by a similarly devastating tsunami because it takes an enormously strong earthquake to generate one.

"That's really what has created all of these problems – that



The sign pointing to refuge in the hills around the Bang Pae waterfall.

the earthquake is just so massive," said Dan Blakeman, a USGS earthquake analyst.

Geophysicist John Bishop, who lives in Phuket, says, "It's highly improbable that Phuket would experience another tsunami, especially from that source."

"The pressure is gone from the tectonic plates in the Indian Ocean and it will be a long time before that pressure builds again."

The tsunami that hit Phuket's west coast, Phi Phi and especially Khao Lak was one of the biggest ever recorded. The east coast north of Phuket City was hardly affected, experiencing only a small swell, according to workmen on a site at Ao Por.

Why, then, has this area suddenly become a "tsunami hazard area"?

Even odder, why is a tsunami evacuation route sign placed at the intersection of the Bang

Pae waterfall road and the main road through Pa Khlok?

If we need to drive up that road to escape a tsunami, we'd better hope that Noah and his Ark are around somewhere. It's a good 10 minutes' drive from the nearest seawater and at least 30 minutes from the nearest beaches seriously affected by the 2004 tsunami.

For residents, the placement of the signs indicates little thought, though they are good for a laugh, if nothing else.

On the other hand, for those who don't know the island, or people who don't have the education or knowledge to understand the cause of the tsunami, the signs may be unnecessarily alarming, apart from being a waste of money.

Clearly, the government has to take responsibility for the safety of people in the event of another such occurrence, but these signs are no help. There is no way any one in a tsunami-threatened area is going to head for Bang Pae waterfall.

Or maybe someone in charge of tsunami warnings has decided to open a restaurant up there?

LARGER THAN LIFE

By Graham Doven

For residents, the placement of the signs indicates little thought, though they are good for a laugh, if nothing else.

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A tropical modern-style home villa with local touches. The overall design emphasizes simplicity. An L-shaped set allows more space for family activities at night. Glass walls make it possible to view all areas of the house. A private swimming pool held salt water has therapeutic benefits. It is located in an enclosed area adjoining the sea and can be viewed from two master bedrooms on the second floor. To increase privacy, the garage is specially designed to stand in a spot that partly covers the pool.
All this combines to make The Beach Pool Villa one of the best-designed two-story homes with a pool in the Kata area.

The unit is 13.25 x 23.50m on an area of 14 x 23m. Usage area is 415sqm with swimming pool included.

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Home of the Week

Kathu



TOP FLIGHT

This week's Home of the Week is a two-bedroom, two-bathroom house with fine views over Loch Palm Golf Club's fairways and lakes, as well as the surrounding country and hillsides.

Situated centrally in the district of Kathu, the property is on the highest point of a walled, sloping 1,600-square-meter plot and is in an excellent location not too far from Phuket International Airport, large shopping malls, the British Curriculum International School and several country clubs. Two international-standard hospitals are just a short drive away.

The home has an appealing approach via a covered walkway, featuring timber ceilings and balustrades, sandwashed pillars and terracotta paving.

The spacious, bright and airy open-plan living and dining rooms open onto a wrap-around, sandwashed and terracotta tiled terrace with panoramic views of the golf course and the valley.

There is an adjoining modern kitchen featuring a crisp black-and-white color scheme, with granite bench tops and more than ample storage provided in overhead and below-bench cupboards. Close by is a maid's room, a laundry and a guest powder room.

The two luxurious bedrooms feature timber floors and built-in furniture, including, in the master bedroom, a spacious walk-in wardrobe/dressing room.

The contemporary design gives the home charming appeal while the interior decor is set using a charcoal, white and cream color scheme.

The materials used are of high quality and the home is air conditioned. Doors and windows have curtains and insect screens and facilities include hot water heating, a telephone line and covered car parking.

The home is partly-furnished and the land has a *Nor Sor 3 Gor* title. The price is 18 million baht.

For more information contact Richard Lusted at Siam Real Estate, at Tel: 076-288908, Email: info@siamrealestate.com or visit the website at www.siamrealestate.com

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Construction Update

by Anongnat Sartpisut

The heavy equipment is being rolled away and contractor Civil & Interior Co Ltd is adding the finishing touches to the 77-room Thiwa Ratri Resort & Spa, built at a cost of 300 million baht. The resort's soft opening will be on March 9.

Resort owner Varanee Sangrat and General Manager Permsak Yodmit explained to the *Gazette* that construction of the 4½-star resort, on 10 rai near Phuket FantaSea, began early in 2004.

The resort is made to a Balinese design, complete with pagodas, and multi-layered roofs with figurines perched on top peering down onto guests.

Three of the 77 units are Deluxe Villas, each with 160 square meters of open-plan space, and each decorated with handmade features including a large indoor water feature.

Honeymoon Villas of 105 sqm, also featuring in-room waterfalls, comprise 12 units, and seven units are Deluxe Pavilions, each of 95sqm.

The bulk of the accommodation is in the 55 Honeymoon Pavilions, each offering 70sqm of space.

Others facilities include a conference room that can accommodate 140 guests seated seminar-style, as well as restaurants, two swimming pools, a spa and a fitness center.

Several architects were employed to make the best use of each architect's individual flair in creating K. Varanee's concept of an ideal relaxing atmosphere.

"We want guests to feel they are in natural surroundings during their stay at the resort. Customers can see we have worked hard to make sure that 90% of the work that went into building the resort was done by hand," K. Varanee said.

To that end bricklayers were brought in from Cambodia and Laos to build the columns as they had the necessary skill in laying the bricks in the classic Asian style.

Adding to the classic style, the 100,000 or so handmade bricks used in the construction of the resort were all imported and had been tempered by 50 years of exposure to the elements.

K. Permsak explained,

'Handmade' Thiwa Ratri set to open



Above, the signature handmade bricks are in evidence around the pool. Below, one of the spacious villas.



"The bricks were imported from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos and 'aged' by more than 50 years. We did not use cement to make the columns; instead we used the ancient style of bricks laid by hand.

"The effort we have put into building the resort will demonstrate to guests that we will give them the same level of service," he added.

K. Permsak explained that the materials used were all top-quality and chosen for their handmade, natural looks. The handmade floor tiles were imported from Indonesia, and teak has been used extensively throughout the rooms, for structural support, main features and even furniture, he explained.

"The color scheme makes

use of the materials' natural colors," he added.

The infrastructure supporting the resort includes an on-site well and reserve water tank to ensure supply in the dry season.

Thiwa Ratri is the latest project by Kamala Property Co, also owned by K. Varanee, which has 20 years' experience in property development on the island, including the Varanee Bypass shophouses on the bypass road, and the upscale Baan Rimtarn Cherngtalay Villa development.

For more information contact 99/99 Moo 3, Kamala Beach, Kathu, Phuket 83120. Tel: 076-279999. Fax: 076-279688. Email: info@thiwaratri-resort.com Website: www.thiwaratri-resort.com

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PA KHLOK PACKAGE

Deal includes fully-furnished house with 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, dining area, sofa, 3 air-con units, and kitchen, as well as car and motorbike. Secure parking. 5 minutes from Heroines' Monument. Please call for further information. Tel: 07-2760529.

PATONG CONDOS

Condos with nice sea views, 28sqm and 56sqm, for sale. Priced from 750,000 baht. Near bank and post office. Tel: 09-4740227. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

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Property Gazette

HOUSE IN PATONG



A 1-bedroom, timber house on Nanai Rd, overlooking Patong. Quiet, private, good garden and views. Good potential. Price: 3 million baht. Tel: 07-0444387. Email: cosmicrhythms@yahoo.co.uk

WATERFRONT VILLA

Secluded location. Views of Phang Nga Bay. Luxury accommodation. Offers over 1.2 million euros. Please contact for details. Tel: 04-0541360. Email: yes-siam@hotmail.com

CHERNG TALAY

Near Laguna: 1 rai + 1 ngan, Chanote, good for commercial use. Resident location on main road. 5.1 million baht. Tel: 06-2746511.

LAND FOR SALE

Cherng Talay-Manik, 2 rai of nice land, with a mountain view, a 2-meter high surrounding wall, many natural palm trees. Option to split into 1 rai parcels. Asking 3 million baht per rai. Tel: 06-2746511. Email: baancoconut@hotmail.com

KATA LUXURY CONDO

210 sqm, in 5-star development. Beach access and fantastic sea views. Big terrace, Jacuzzi, high quality. 15.5 million baht. Tel: 06-686-5998. Email: info@tropical-homes.net

BEAUTIFUL LAND

for sale. Nearly 1 rai, near Panva Bel Air. Has road, electricity, water and super sea view. Asking price: 8.2 million baht. Tel: 076-212248, 01-8929592. Email: kodesh32@hotmail.com

PRIME BEACHFRONT AT A LOW PRICE



27 rai of truly prime beachfront land on an island with hornbills and unique natural habitat. Suitable for eco-friendly estate or resort. Joint venture considered. Price: 42 million baht. Email: dsandler@inet.co.th

BEACH LAND, 38 RAI

10 million baht per rai. Sakul Beach. Serious inquiries only! Call Tammy for English (09-5211749) or Somporn for Thai (07-2849676). Email: tammyb@nustyle.net

KATA LAND PLOTS

900m to the beach. Priced from 1.3 million baht. Please contact. Tel: 01-0918908. Email: katabeachestate@hotmail.com

NEW POOL VILLA

In Land & Houses Park, 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Price: 6.2 million baht. Tel: 07-885-2969. Email: juuekata@hotmail.com

HOUSE & LAND

for sale. House and land for sale just 2 minutes from beautiful Nai Thon Beach. Price is a negotiable 3.2 million baht. Tel: 07-2811995.

LAND FOR SALE

Natai Beach. Last piece on the beach with Chanote title. Urgent sale. Tel: 01-9561077.

PRA THONG ISLAND

Phang Nga Province. 48-rai plot with mangroves and beach frontage. 1 million baht per rai. Tel: 09-5944017.

70 RAI AT KHAO SOK



Exquisite property with 300 meters of stream frontage, limestone cliffs, old trees and wildlife. Suitable for nature spa resort or private estate. Price: 30 million baht. Email: dsandler@inet.co.th

HOUSE FOR SALE IN VILLA 5



Phuket Villa 5, 90sqm, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a large living area and kitchen, 3 air conditioners, built-in wardrobe, 5-piece rattan lounge suite and a phone line. Only 5 minutes to Central Phuket Festival and only 15 minutes to Rawai. For sale by owner. Asking 4.5 million baht (negotiable). No agents! Tel: 04-1868531, 01-5988725. Email: s_oranut@hotmail.com

AO MAKHAM

Stunning sea view near main road, with electricity supply and the most beautiful view. Good for a developer. Chanote title. Price: 4.6 million baht. Please call for more details. Tel: 09-6525664.

LAND FOR SALE

at Boat Lagoon Resort. "North Bank Residence", area approximately 688sqm. Please contact. Tel: 06-5950258, 01-6932791. Email: info@phuketprivatelagoon.com

SEAVIEW VILLAGE



9 houses overlooking Kata/Karon Beach, including 1.5 or 7 rai of land. Priced for quick sale at 17 million baht or 39 million baht. For more information and pictures, call Tel: 01-0808557 or email: info@no1visa.com

ABSOLUTE BEACHFRONT




for sale. 2.2 rai of absolute beachfront land with Chanote title at Khok Kloy. Please call for details. No agents please. Tel: 07-889-1717. Email: wayne_phuket@yahoo.com

HOUSE FOR SALE


48sqm, 2 minutes from Central Festival Phuket. Free ADSL, cable TV, phone, fax. Has 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 1 free minibar and also a new car. Price 3.5 million baht. Tel: 09-6455044. Email: lisadtac@gmail.com

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LAND IN RAWAI

with 50% sea view, for sale. On 7.75 rai, in a good location, for 38 million baht. Tel: 04-8374429. Email: sales@chokechainproperty.com

LAND IN RAWAI

with partial sea view for sale, with 62 rai. 10 rai with sea view panorama. Price: 370 million baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 04-8374429. Email: sales@chokechainproperty.com

PATONG TOWNHOUSE

16m x 6m, 2 stories, 2 large bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, carpark. 3.45 million baht. Tel: 076-296206, 01-084-2831. Email: bax_winsor@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE

Urgent. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen, parking, phone, aircon. Asking 1.8 million baht. Please contact for more info. Tel: 07-2674342. Email: agentsmith@ji-net.com

RAWAI, SMALL PLOT

480sqm. The last plot. Cheap price: 1.1 million baht. Act fast. Please call for more info. Tel: 06-2670898.

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Property Gazette

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- Latest Raimon Land project on Kata Hill, 2 & 3 b/r condo.
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Contact Mike at SV Associates for details.
Telephone 06 277 6698

NAI HARN PRIVATE HOUSE



For sale. 3 minutes drive to the beach, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, aircon, fully furnished, carport, shared pool, tropical garden, beautiful view, quiet area, 160sqm. Condition as new. 5.9 million baht. Please call for details. Tel: 07-2660228 (Helene), 01-7192467 (Tuk).

THE BEST, NO JOKE, THE BEST



The old song goes: "they paved paradise and put up a parking lot..." (Sound familiar? This is what Phuket is becoming.) We refuse to do this; our land is right beside a national park with the best sea view of Phang Nga Bay I have ever seen (considered by many to be one of the 7 wonders of the world). We are going to keep the park-like atmosphere, so no street lights and minimal paved roads. If you like giant original-growth trees behind you and Phang Nga Bay in all its wonder in front of you, call me. Chanote title, sea views. Starting at 3.8 million baht per rai. Also, flat land with some sea views available for 2.4 million baht per rai. Tel: 07-2747470. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

HALF-RAI PLOTS

Located in a luxury development with underground electricity, 10 minutes from the airport and 20 minutes to Central Festival. For quick sale at only 1.3 million baht. Tel: 01-2712825.

WANPHUM VILLAS



Modern-themed villas at 2 locations: Laguna area and Chalong hillside. Swimming pool, 3 bedrooms, fully fitted kitchen, covered parking. Price: 7.7 million baht. Please contact for details. Email: wanphum@yahoo.com

4 RAI OF LAND CHALONG BAY

Near yacht club. Asking 2.5 million baht per rai. Has road, electricity and water supply. Please contact Andy. Tel: 07-2747470. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

BESIDE WATER CHALONG BAY

5.5 rai beside water. Asking 9.5 million per rai; good for expensive homes or apartments. Please contact Andy. Tel: 07-2747470. Email: nsupin@yahoo.com

LAGUNA LAND 50 RAI

1.5 million baht per rai. Amphur Thalung. Serious inquiries only! Call Tammy for English (09-5211749) or Somporn for Thai (07-2849676). Email: tammyb@nustyle.net

CHEAP BYPASS RD LAND
20rai behind Toyota. 3.5 million baht per rai. Please contact for more info. Email: ek_phuket@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR SALE

in Phuket City. 2 stories, 91 sq wah, 5 bedrooms, fully furnished, Phuket City. Please call for further details. Tel: 01-8928740.

NAI THON 28 RAI

Nor Sor 3 Gor title deed. Near Alamas Hotel. Please contact for more information. Email: ek_phuket@hotmail.com

Properties For Rent

RAWAI HOUSE FOR RENT



Fully furnished house for rent, 220sqm, with 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 4 toilets, living room, kitchen, air conditioning, Wi-Fi, cable TV, a tropical garden with swimming pool, very quiet, electricity not included. Rent: 40,000 baht per month for a minimum of 3 months. Please contact for info. Tel: 07-2678389. Email: mes_files@hotmail.com See our website at: www.christianesblue.com

NEW SERVICED APTS IN CHALONG

Furnished studio suites and rooftop spa pool with sea view. From 9,500 baht a month. Tel: 01-8938592, 06-2826221. Email: saneroad@yahoo.com

HOUSE + BIG GARDEN

2-bedroom with air conditioners, hot shower. Location: a quiet area at Palai Green, Chalong. Tel: 01-8924311.

KAMALA APARTMENT

Furnished, includes ADSL, wireless network. Long term: 8,000 baht per month. Tel: 01-5385285. Email: bbq@loxinfo.co.th

2 BEDROOMS, LAKEVIEW

3-story apartment/loft with 2 bathrooms near Lotus. Has air conditioning, UBC and phone. Asking 20,000 baht per month. Tel: 01-8928208.

9 RAI

Plot with a nice view - good for a resort, spa, etc - next to Pae Ma Nam, for long-term rent. Close to hospital, about 1.5km from Big C, Tesco-Lotus, and Central Festival. Please call for more info. Tel: 01-8675084.

NICE SEA VIEW

New house for rent: 4 bedrooms, pool & garden, fully furnished, prime location, 10 minutes to town, school & shopping. Please call K. Sitt for details. Tel: 01-8317172.



NEW 2-STORY HOME

for rent. Very convenient location in Phuket City. Just 5 mins to Tesco-Lotus, Central, Bangkok Hospital Phuket. Unfurnished. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, front and back yards. 18,000 baht per month. Please contact Ann at **01 868 7676**

RESTAURANT

Place for restaurant available to rent. New tables and chairs already there. One aircon unit, toilet and shower, as well as water and electricity. Can also rent separate kitchen. Price negotiable. Next to Easy Fitness Center: very good location plus parking. Call for details and ask for Yvon. Tel: 076-220716, 01-8918755. Fax: 076-220739. Email: easy4fitness@yahoo.com

TROPICAL GARDEN

2 minutes from Chalong Pier. Houses with 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, phone, satellite TV and access to a big swimming pool. From 14,000 baht plus 2 months' deposit. Tel: 01-0808557. Email: info@no1visa.com

NEW HOUSES FOR RENT

Long-term, Chalong area. 3 bedrooms with aircon, 2 bathrooms, telephone, fully furnished. Tel: 09-7288311.

RAWAI CONDO 4 LEASE

Has 5- to 10-year lease. Asking 150,000 baht. Tel: 06-6865567. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

NEW 1-BEDROOM APT

in Patong Tower. Beautiful, newly renovated apartment in Patong. Near beach and shopping. 25,000 baht per month. Tel: 09-4887875. Email: deherder@hotmail.com

BUSINESS UNIT

Surin Beach, main road, 10,000 baht per month. Email: phuketopportunity@hotmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

A 2-bedroom furnished house with aircon, 1 bathroom, a kitchen, a living room, a phone line, car park and garden. Tel: 01-7971709, 01-5379878. Email: suwittra@hotmail.com

LAKEVIEW HOUSE

in Kamala. New, fully furnished, 2 bedrooms, UBC, air conditioning. Asking 20,000 baht per month. Please call Tel: 01-8928208.

BOAT LAGOON

Long-term rental (minimum 12 months). 3-story waterfront townhouse. 3 double en-suite bedrooms. 4th bathroom. Large lounge, kitchen/dining room, rooftop sala and Jacuzzi, carport. ADSL and UBC. Full aircon. 60,000 baht per month, including management fee. Tel: 076-273492, 07-2789908. Email: ftwth@phuket.ksc.co.th

NEW HOUSE FOR RENT

or sale. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 air conditioners, cable TV, garden, hot shower and kitchen. 5 minutes to Patong Beach for long-term rent at 30,000 baht per month. For sale at 4.6 million baht. Call for info. Tel: 01-7356684, 04-1871939.

BUNGALOW FOR RENT

1 bedroom, quiet location, 7,000 baht a month for long-term rental. Tel: 06-2790837, 01-7196998.

RAWAI HOUSE

for lease. Has 5- to 10-year lease. Asking 250,000 baht. Tel: 06-6865567. Email: chotip_5@hotmail.com

2 LUXURY STUDIO

apartments in Rawai. Newly remodeled. Furnished, and with seaview, cable TV, extras. Long-term. No smokers. 7,000 baht per month for 1 apartment. 13,000 baht per month for 2 apartments. Tel: 04-0571420.

NEW 2-BED HOUSE

Unfurnished house, big garden, quiet area, Muang Tong Soi 1, 3km to town, 2km to beach. 5,000 baht per month. Tel: 05-8855415.

KAMALA BEACH

Large 2-bedroom penthouse apartment. Furnished. Very nice. Long- or short-term let. 25,000 baht per month or 1,500 baht per day. Tel: 05-7834065.

ROOM FOR RENT

in Kathu. Asking 3,000 baht per month. For Thai lady only. Tel: 01-7281887.

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See more classified ads at

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Property Gazette

Properties Wanted

HOUSE TO RENT

We are a family from Sweden looking for a nice house to rent for the month of December 2006. Can be in Chalong, Phuket City, Karon or Kata. We want at least 3 bedrooms, kitchen with fridge and microwave, garden, washing machine and aircon. We can pay up to 30,000 baht per month. If you have something that might interest us, please contact. Email: annja2003@telia.com

WANT TO BUY

Looking for a 2-story house with at least 3 bedrooms to buy this month. Should be in a secure estate with pool, or a house with access to a pool. Please email me details, including size of land, house and pictures. Want to buy this month. Max price: 4 million baht. Email: tg-a@online.no

OFFICE WANTED

Kata/Chalong. Smaller office (25-40 sqm) in Kata, Kata Noi or Chalong from March 2006. ADSL is required. For more info. Please contact. Email: pereriknorback@msn.com

1 RAI, SEAVIEW

in village. Land with sea view wanted for building a house on. Must be in a good area with many neighbors, and near shopping in Kamala. Email photo. Tel: 05-7842004. Email: ahw@telia.com

TOWNHOUSE

wanted. Looking for a townhouse, ideally on a busy street in Patong or Kata area, for sale or rent long term. Ground floor will be used for small business, upper floors for living. Email: rina@asianet.co.th

LONG-TERM

apartment. Wanted for 5 years, commencing August: a 2-bedroom apartment with pool access, located in Surin Bay area. Can pay a maximum of 40,000 baht per month. Email: aussie.ridge@hotmail.com

Accommodation Available

ROOMS TO LET



Lake-view apartments in Kathu. Fully furnished with aircon, fridge, cable TV, hot water and car park. Rent 200 baht a day. Tel: 076-202585, 09-1968449. Email: ketmaneeclayton61@hotmail.com

PHUKET SEAVIEW

Apartments. Luxury apartments on a hillside in Patong, rooms of 82-200sqm, large terrace, kitchen, swimming pool. Affordable long-term rates. Tel: 076-296888. Fax: 076-297021. Email: contact@prince-edouard.com For further details, please see our website at: www.prince-edouard.com

KATA BEACH

Southern Fried Rice, a brand-new guesthouse, 3 minutes walk from the beach, with seaview rooms, 2 balcony rooms facing the beach, wireless Internet, a pool and an excellent restaurant. All rooms have air conditioning, a minibar, cable TV, a safe and a king-sized bed. Tel: 01-8948446. www.southernfriedrice.com

PATONG CONDO

Good room in Patong Condotel with "everything". 500 baht/night. Please call. Tel: 01-8948446. For more details please contact. Email: sfrkata@hotmail.com

Accommodation Wanted

APARTMENT OR VILLA

Looking for villa or apartment in Patong, Karon, Kata or nearby. Should have 2 bedrooms, kitchen and, preferably, a living room. Needs to have Internet connection with at least ADSL. Prefer a Wi-Fi network. That the connection works properly is a HIGH priority. The stay is for March and April, and, if everything works well, May. We are 2 people. Please contact with details. Email: ekim9999@hotmail.com

LONG-TERM RENTAL

42-year-old Aussie male seeks semi-long term accommodation. Prefer unit or just a room with toilet and shower (cold water OK). Must have basic facilities such as fridge, cooking facilities and some furniture (bed, table, chairs, etc). A ceiling fan or two would be nice also. Am currently at OnOn Hotel and happy, but would like to start cooking. Open to any suggestions, ideas or offers. Please email details to: clarkstar888@hotmail.com

NEED BASIC ROOM

and Internet. I'm looking for a basic room with access to the Internet. Anywhere in Phuket is fine. Under 6,000 baht per month. Will look at anything. Pls contact for details. Tel: 06-2677236. Email: wes@1stchoicecommerce.com

WANTING TO RENT

in Kamala. I want to rent a small house or apartment in Kamala or close by. Long-term rental and reasonable price required. Tel: 06-2664338. Email: mustiquematt@ehotelier.com

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FRIDGE FOR SALE

6-month-old, blue Mitsubishi. Stands approx 1.5 meters tall. 5-year warranty. 3,000 baht for quick sale. Tel: 04-172-7715. Email: asotek77@hotmail.com

Household Services Needs

NANNY/HOUSEMAID

wanted. British-Thai family would like an honest, reliable person to help with general housekeeping duties. We have a four-month-old son. English speaking preferred. Email: nmorgan@loxinfo.co.th

HANDYMEN

Urgently needed. Must be able to do: painting, landscaping, carpentry work. Must work independently. Please contact for more info. Tel: 06-2688061. Email: schendl@loxinfo.co.th

Property Services

CONSTRUCTION

waste. We have a place to dump construction waste - concrete, cement, tiles, dirt, soil, etc. Email: nichakan@capeyamu.com

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| <p>Formosa 51 (1994)</p>  <p>\$160,000 USD</p> | <p>Imp 55 (2001)</p>  <p>\$399,000 USD</p> | <p>Hi Tech 50 (1990)</p>  <p>\$295,000 USD</p> | <p>Riviera 39 (1994)</p>  <p>\$249,000 USD</p> |
|--|---|---|---|

Dealership Office
The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
Contact: Martin Holmes
tel: 076 238 800
fax: 076 273 319
Email: info@leemarine.com

Brokerage Office
The Boat Lagoon Marina Phuket
Contact: Andrew de Bruin / Marcus Overman
Mobile: 01 894 1530 / 01 968 1437
tel/fax: 076 239 729
Email: brokerage@leemarine.com

Yacht Haven Marina Office
The Yacht Haven Marina Phuket
Contact: Jim Poulsen
Mobile: 01 891 3237
tel/fax: 076 206 260
Email: yacht Haven@leemarine.com

Dedicated Service Department

www.leemarine.com

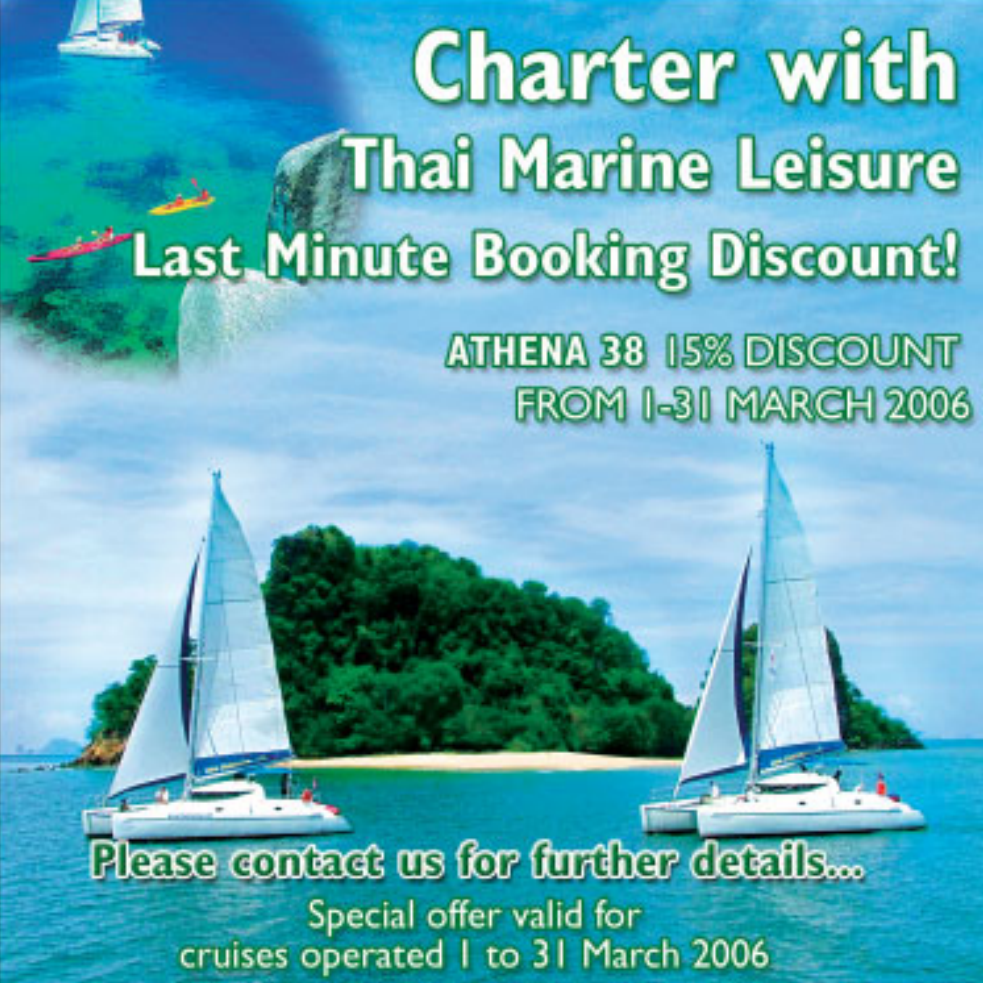
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| "A week in Paradise" 7 days/6 nights (6 guests) | "Honeymoon cruise in Paradise" 4 days/3 nights | "Escape in Paradise" 3 days/2 nights |
| "Weekend in Paradise" 2 days/1 night | Overnight tour max 8 persons | |

"Day cruise in Paradise" 8.30 am – 4.30 pm "Sunset in Paradise" 6 pm – 9 pm
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Fax: 076-333 035 Website: www.allasiayachts.com





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Boats & Marine



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www.max-marine-asia.com

BOAT BARGAIN
7.5m x 2.5m, fiberglass, Solas approved, many accessories made in stainless steel, etc. Unfinished project. Price: 40,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-279-543.

37FT WOODEN SPEEDBOAT HULL
Designed for people transport; 5 years old but never stayed in the water; half-refurbished, already covered with epoxy; includes trailer: 120,000 baht. Extra parts e.g. tanks, hydraulic steering, pumps, solar panel, seat covers 30P, etc: 85,000 baht. 2 x outdrive (Z-Drive) Volvo 290, 20 years old (need refurbishing), imported from the US, with all papers: 120,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-892-4282. Fax: 076-288833. Email: taxiregio@freenet.de

BOSTON-WHALER
21ft fiberglass central console and twin 4-stroke Honda 50hp engines. Trailer, Thai registration. As new, made in 2004. For sale in Pattaya for just 420,000 baht. Contact. Email: carlossecretgarden@yahoo.com

5HP OUTBOARD
Yamaha. 10,000 baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 01-9704638.

19FT FISHING BOAT
Stong fiberglass hull. Stainless-steel center console; steel trailer. Brand new! Price: only 250,000 baht. Please contact for more information. Tel: 06-9724805.

WINDSURFER WANTED
Windsurfer - complete - 150 liters and not too old. Please contact for more information. Tel: 076-385-801, 07-2760141. Email: kat_stockleclark@yahoo.co.uk

Island Job Mart



British Curriculum International School, Phuket

The British Curriculum International School, Phuket (formerly Dulwich International College) is a leading British international day and boarding school (18 months-18 years) offering a quality education to the international community of the Asia/Pacific region. We require the following:

Teaching Assistant / Secretary Assistant

- Thai national
- University degree
- Knowledge of Microsoft Office
- A high level of English fluency
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skill

Teaching qualifications and experience of child care / teaching preferable (For teaching assistant post)

Please send a short letter of application and CV with a recent photo or apply in person to:
British Curriculum International School, Phuket
59 Moo 2, Thepkasatri Road, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83200
Tel: 076-238711-20 # 2206, 1111 Fax: 076-239040 E-mail: ubonvadeer@bcis.ac.th



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An international company specializing in sales of unique and exclusive products/services has vacancies for

FEMALE SALES CONSULTANT <PHUKET BRANCH>
EARN 40,000.00 - 80,000.00 BAHT PER MONTH

Qualifications:

- 25-35 years of age, Thai nationality
- Must speak English
- Self-motivated, self-confident and able to sell
- Experience with cosmetic products or other types of personal selling could be useful but is not necessary
- Selected candidates will receive high earnings and full, comprehensive training

TELESALES / RECEPTIONIST
EARN 15,000.00 - 20,000.00 BAHT PER MONTH

Qualifications:

- Thai females
- Able to speak, read and write English
- Able to use computer (MS Office program)
- Work experience in sales/telesales
- Good personality and service-minded
- Interpersonal skills and enthusiastic

Please submit application in English only, with curriculum vitae and recent photo, to:
SVENSON HAIR CENTER THASIA LIMITED
P.O. BOX 1057, SILDOM, BANGKOK 10504

E-COMMERCE MANAGER
A fast-growing Internet garment retailer needs a native English-speaker who is highly computer literate, a perfectionist, a leader, and experienced. Salary 40k-80k. Email: holyjob@gmail.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE
Representative. A fast-growing Internet garment retailer needs a fluent English-speaker who is highly computer literate, a perfectionist, experienced, and a fast typer. Salary 15k-35k. Email: holyjob@gmail.com

VILLA COOKS WANTED
A high-end villa estate is looking for 3 cooks with a good knowledge of Thai food and the ability to speak English. Good salary and benefits are offered to successful candidates. Please contact for more info. Tel: 01-8959144. Email: peter@shibumithailand.com

COOKS AND WAITERS
Wanted: 2 cooks (a couple) with experience in both Thai and international food. Waiters with some experience, and knowledge of English. Tel: 02-2491533, 07-0888724. Email: jsmithy2005@yahoo.com

ADMINISTRATION
Officer. Bowen Training seeks a female with fair English skills and a bright personality. Salary: 8,000 - 10,000 baht per month. Tel: 076-264442. Fax: 076-264-443. Email: recruitment@bowentraining.com

HAIRDRESSER
in Phuket. A leading fitness center with French management is looking for an experienced English-speaking hairdresser. International experience preferred. Tel: 05-782-1194. Email: checknat2000@yahoo.com

SEEKING GOOD
staff. Civil Engineer, Foreman, Secretary wanted to work in Krabi. Staff house and good benefits offered. Please contact for more info. Tel: 01-7973401. Fax: 076-274272. Email: yoon@krabisunset.com

WANTED: FARANG EXPORTER
We are looking for a farang to export drink. Very good salary offered. Please call for more information. Tel: 04-8478352.

Island Job Mart




Asia Web Direct is expanding and needs additional, enthusiastic staff to join our growing team in our modern and exciting work environment:

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| PHUKET | BANGKOK |
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| SAMUI | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web Editor 1 position • Web Designer 1 position | |

Full description of the jobs is online at www.asiawebdirect.com/jobs.htm
We offer excellent salary and benefits, please apply directly at:

Asia Web Direct Co., Ltd.
4th Floor, Muang Mai Building, 9/17 Thepkasattri Road, Phuket, 83000
Tel: 076-236 550 Fax: 076-236 542
Email: hr@asiawebdirect.com



Banyan Tree Resorts and Spas (Thailand) Co., Ltd. is a leading spa operator. To meet our rapid growth and expansion, we invite suitable and qualified candidates to join our team.

Spa Receptionist 7 positions (based in Phuket)

Qualifications:

- Male or female aged between 22-30 years old
- Bachelor's degree in any field
- Good command of English language (minimum TOEIC 550)
- Positive attitude and pleasant personality
- Good team-work and fast learner
- Basic computer skills
- Attention to detail and service-minded

Assistant Administration Manager 1 position (based in Phuket)
HR Development Coordinator 1 position (based in Phuket)

Qualifications:

- Male or female aged between 28-35 years old
- Bachelor's degree in a related field
- Strong administrative background
- Strong English communications skills (both written and spoken)
- Work well under pressure and able to meet deadlines
- Computer literacy

Applicants should provide a full detailed English resumé, expected salary and a recent photo to:

Human Resources Department
Fax: (076) 324 391
E-mail: spa-hr@banyantree.com

British Curriculum International School, Phuket are now seeking:

an experienced native **ESL teacher** to teach children for a temporary position in March. The successful candidate needs to be:

- Passionate about education and demonstrate a long-term commitment to teaching
- A degree holder with recognized ESL qualifications
- Have 2 years teaching experience with primary-aged children

Cover Teachers for the Primary School
Teachers are required for part-time work in the Primary School to cover for staff absences. Applicants should possess a Bachelor's degree with teaching certification and have previous experience of teaching in the primary age range.

The salary will be commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Candidates should e-mail a short letter of application, CV, recent photograph and details of referees to: kamolphanv@bcis.ac.th

The closing date for applications is 24th February 06



British Curriculum International School, Phuket (BCIS)
59 Moo 2, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew, Muang, Phuket 83200 Thailand
Tel: 076 238 711-20 Fax: 076 238 750 Bangkok Tel: 02 636 8991-2 Fax: 02 636 8992



Thailand's Leading Marine Brokerage and New Yacht Dealership have a vacancy in our Boat Lagoon office to be part of our dedicated brokerage team. Role includes office administration, support for brokerage staff and government office liaison. Position available immediately:

Brokerage Secretary:

- ▷ Thai national, Male/Female, educated to degree level or equivalent administrative experience
- ▷ Computer skills required (MS Word – MS Excel – MS Outlook)
- ▷ Proficiency in both written and spoken English. Other languages an advantage.
- ▷ Good communication skills and a professional attitude

Please send an application letter together with resumé, expected salary and recent photograph to Martin Holmes, General Manager.
Email: martin@leemarine.com, Tel: 076-238803, Fax: 076-273319, or apply in person at Lee Marine Head Office, Phuket Boat Lagoon Marina.

PHUKET LAW FIRM
Seeks a part- or full-time secretary and lawyer. Email: scphuket@yahoo.com

COOK WANTED
for Koh Kaew Pisadan Bungalows, off Laem Phromthep. Please call for more information. Tel: 09-5944017.


PADI DIVING
Instructor. Required for a busy 5-star dive center on Phi Phi. Please contact for more information. Tel: 01-8912688. Email: tony@diveh2osportz.com

OFFICE ASSISTANT
wanted for property agent in Cherng Talay. Must have good command of written and spoken English, good computer skills. Tel: 07-8813521.

INTERNET CAFE
Urgently required for Internet cafe Thai female with good spoken English and computer skills. Must be friendly and service-minded. Please contact K. Cat. Tel: 07-909-1640. Email: khemikas@gmail.com

SALESPERSONS
Siam Real Estate requires experienced Thai salespersons with good English or foreigners with a work permit. Must know island well and have transport. Salary plus commission. Please contact. Tel: 076-288908. Email: nice@siamrealestate.com Please see our website at www.siamrealestate.com

STAFF URGENTLY
required. Distribution Manager, female, age 28-35, Thai national, good written and spoken English, PC experience in Word, Excel & Internet, good administrator, car driver with license. Contact Khun Nit, Image Asia Events. Tel: 076-264491-2.



The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following positions:

I. SENIOR ARTIST

II. ARTIST

- ▶ Graphic-design skills and knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, Photoshop and Dreamweaver required
- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard working, attention to detail
- ▶ Able to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines
- ▶ Good communication skills, team player
- ▶ English speaker

III. ASSISTANT ACCOUNTANT

- ▶ Thai, age 23 up
- ▶ Bachelor's degree or higher (in any field)
- ▶ Reasonable command of written and spoken English
- ▶ Must have a car driver's license
- ▶ Accounting experience would be an advantage, but the Gazette is willing to provide training for a novice with good interpersonal skills and unquestioned honesty

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Sudjai Suanya, Human Resources, by email, fax or post to:

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd
367/2 Yaowarat Rd, T. Taladyai, A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Fax: 076-213971 Email: sudjai@phuketgazette.net



DIVING ONLINE, the leading Internet provider of discounted dive packages, is seeking for qualified staff to join its team. Applications are being taken for:

1 Experienced Web Developer

- Male/female
- Thai national
- Good communication skills and command of spoken & written English
- Experience in software design and development
- Experience with HTML, JAVA & PHP
- Work experience in SEO a plus
- Have good structured design and programming techniques

1 Booking Officer

- Male/female
- Thai national
- Excellent communication skills & good command of spoken and written English
- Good computer skills
- Experience in the diving industry

Applications stating qualifications and experience, as well as expected remuneration should be sent to: info@save-money-diving.com

Tout, Trader & Trumpet



The PLANTATION – Kamala Bay is looking for qualified candidates for the following positions:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Sales Negotiators | 2 positions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thai national, male/female ✓ Sales experience in real estate ✓ Excellent presentation, communication and computer skills ✓ Strong ability to work in a team ✓ Good command of both spoken and written English | |
| Accountant | 1 position |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thai national, male/female ✓ Administrative and accounting skills ✓ Good command of English ✓ Minimum one year of experience | |
| Secretary | 1 position |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thai national, female ✓ Good command of English ✓ Minimum one year of experience | |
| Driver and messenger | 1 position |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Thai national, male ✓ Excellent knowledge of Phuket area ✓ Ability to speak in English considered an asset | |

Please send a CV and a recent photo to Khun Ling
 Email: info@theplantationphuket.com
 Tel: 076 386040-2 Fax: 076 386043
 www.theplantationphuket.com

ASIA-PACIFIC TROPICAL HOMES
 The region's most widely distributed lifestyle magazine, is produced from Phuket. It is looking for an Editorial Researcher with strong Internet skills. Thai national with good English. Email: newjob@aapress.net See our website at www.aapress.net for company details.

WANTED: STORE MANAGER, BAKER
 Khun Woody's Bakery and the Sandwich Shoppe in Patong are growing fast, with a new production facility and another shop coming on stream next month. We need experienced Thai nationals who are committed to outstanding service and great food. We're looking for a baker, preferably with high-quality bread experience. We're also looking for an experienced store manager – a customer-oriented leader with good English skills. We offer excellent pay, good bonus, solid training, and a chance to grow professionally with the "Khun Woody" family. Tel: 076-340066. Email: woody@khunwoody.com

SPA MANAGER
 Spa Manager – with 3-5 years' experience - urgently required. Must be confident and able to manage and motivate staff. Good earning potential. Tel: 076-396205. Email: gm@islandiagroup.com

MANGOSTEEN TEAM
 Due to high occupancy, we are seeking to fill the following positions. Only qualified, experienced staff wanted.

- Accounting
 - Store Keeper
 - Cost Controller
 - Income F&B
 - Chef de Partie
 - Waitresses
 - Pool Attendant
 - Stewards
 - Housekeeping
 - Room Maids
- Tel: 076-289223. Fax: 076-289389. Email: myfuture@mangosteen-phuket.com

WAITRESS
 Woman needed to work 6 days a week in a trendy Internet cafe and juice bar in Phuket City. Good salary. Tel: 076-223210, 04-0143121.

CAPTAIN WANTED
 for 60ft-plus motor cruiser, must speak English. Please contact. Tel: 04-1885828. Email: 7@7123000.com

Employment Wanted

GERMAN WOMAN/ MANAGEMENT
 German woman, 33, is looking for a job on Phuket. 11 years' experience in fashion/textile industry, HR management and training of sales staff, and motivating/managing branch managers. I speak German and English. Email: muenchen1@gmx.net

Articles For Sale

FITNESS EQUIPMENT
 Recumbent bike, elliptical. Price new: 80,000 baht. Now 50,000. Very good condition. Tel: 01-8918755. Fax: 076-341032. Email: easy4fitness@yahoo.com

SECONDHAND GYM
 equipment for sale. Full range of free weights, multi-station, 2 x benches (flat and inclined) and bars. Needs attention. 15,000 baht ono. Tel: 076-270752. Fax: 076-270751. Email: tuk@pipsphuket.com

EXERCISE BIKE & GYM
 Smooth, quiet, with computer, like new: paid 12,000 baht; selling for 8,500 baht. 16-exercise multigym: paid 12,000 baht; selling for 5,500 baht. Tel: 01-0882179.

NOTHING TO WEAR?
 New ladies' clothes, sizes S-XXL European brands and sizes. Lots of XL pants, skirts and tops. Sale will be held at Perfection Beauty Salon on Thursday, March 2, noon to 8 pm. Tel: 01-5396106. Email: liessol@phuket.ksc.co.th

DIVE COMPUTER
 Suunto Mosquito, air/nitrox/free/ALT settings. Only 19 dives. 12,000 baht. Tel: 07-8875301.

Articles Wanted

WINDSURFER
 wanted. Windsurfer - complete - 150 litres and not too old. Tel: 076-385801, 07-276-0141. Email: kat_stockleclark@yahoo.co.uk

Bulletins



is holding meetings in English at the following places:

Phuket City
 Mission Hospital
 on Wed and Sun at 7 pm

Bangkok Phuket Hospital
 on Fri at 7 pm

Patong
 Patong Hospital
 on Mon, Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun at 7 pm and on Fri at 8 pm

For more info, please call
 012732053 (Scandinavian),
 018954763 (English) or
 018912895 (Frank)

Starting a business?
 www.phuketgazette.net !

Business Opportunities

GREAT BUSINESS
 opportunities in Phuket. 1) A prime location in the newly constructed Simon Entertainment Plaza on busy Soi Bangla in Patong. 2) 800sqm, 2 floors, 3-year lease with 3-year renewal option. This space is very well suited for an impressive disco/nightclub. 3) 5 shophouses (ground floor only), 48sqm each, 3-year lease with 3-year renewal option. Tel: 01-8267129. Email: infobangla_entertainment@yahoo.com

NEW HOTEL LEASE
 4-year hotel lease for 2.5 million baht. 22 rooms, Air conditioning, cable TV, bar, elevator, maid service, refrigerator, telephone, hot & cold water, sunset viewpoint. Easy to run, good staff. Please contact for more info. Tel: 06-9427318. Email: michael@bayproject.com www.vikingresidence.com

BUSINESSES
 for sale. 3 businesses – beauty salon, Thai massage and Internet cafe – priced for quick sale at 2.8 million baht or nearest offer. Tel: 076-281078, 64-021667215. Fax: 076-383674. Email: tim.s@actrix.co.nz

BAR FOR SALE, KATA
 34 seats, pool table, UBC, 4 rooms above a recently refurbished kitchen. Price: 1.7 million baht. Tel: 04-8478139.



Ocean breeze RESORT APARTMENTS AT LAYAN
A UNIQUE RETAIL OPPORTUNITY
 RESTAURANT & SHOP SPACE FOR RENT
 Tel: 076 271 535
 email: info@oceanbreezephuket.com
 www.oceanbreezephuket.com

FISH JANG BAR
 for sale. Fish Jang Bar for sale on Soi Bangla, Patong, Phuket. Contact for details. Tel: 01-8953575. Email: orchid@smart.co.th

POPULAR & COZY
 B&B (Bed & Breakfast) for sale. Lonely Planet & others rate this charming teak & redwood hotel in Phang Nga "Best In Town". Only 9.9 million baht. Tel: 01-0882179.

KAMALA
 restaurant & bar. Famous for pizza + Tex mex: 40 seats, air conditioning, equipment, stock, and furniture. For sale 500,000 baht + rent 6,000 baht per month. Call after 5 pm. Tel: 076-385940.

KARON BAR
 for sale. includes pool table, TV, hi-fi, bar, etc. Tel: 09-5879551.

BEER/MUSIC GARDEN
 with the best exotic atmosphere, unique prime location, with:
 - the biggest screen, CD, DVD, UBC
 - Stage for live music & dancing
 - 3 bars
 - 1 restaurant, equipped
 Lease the entire venue or rent separately at a rate. Please call. Tel: 01-894-0570. For further details please see our website at www.royal-beerhouse.com

BARGAIN BAR SALE
 in Krabi. Stylish Ao Nang bar for sale. Excellent opportunity. Tel: 075-637862, 06-277-3160. Email: hedley@loxinfo.co.th For further details, please see our website at: www.krabi-reservations.com/barsale.htm

SEEKING PARTNER
 for the first slimming resort in Phuket. Required capital: 6 million baht. Please call for more information. Tel: 06-2740010.

NAI HARN BEACH BAR
 Bar on main road to beach, includes stock, equipment, Playstations, surfboards, DVD hire, games, DVDs, computer, music jukebox, working kitchen, staff, limited only to your imagination, unlimited potential. Please contact for more info. Tel: 05-784-2095. Email: awesomek9@yahoo.com.au



The French Red Cross, Invitation to bid for the construction of a Village for Children in Phuket (Koh Sireh)

Construction of 6 bungalows, one main building (2 storeys) and 3 additional buildings. The total construction area is 1945 sqm situated on 3.2 rai of land already filled. We are looking for a main contractor who should have strong references and be able to complete the whole works (piling, structure, roof, electricity, air conditioning, water, wastewater system, etc).

Delivery of the bidding documents to all interested companies
 The bidding documents (drawings, specifications, administrative documents) will be available at the French Red Cross Office from 10.00 am on the 27th February 2006 for all authorized representatives of qualified bidders upon receipt of a refundable fee of 15000 baht.

Bid due date
 The bidding submissions are to be returned to the French Red Cross Office on the **21st March 2006 at 6.00 pm the latest.**

Information meeting
 An information meeting will be held between 13th-15th March 2006 at the French Red Cross Office.

Address of French Red Cross office
 100 /170 Moo 6, Srisuchat Grand View (on the bypass road), Tambon Rassada, Amphur Muang, Phuket 83000.

Person to contact:
 Mrs Sirirat Saekim, mobile: 09-471 25 96.
 Mrs Monchana Pelaud, mobile: 01-083 41 91.

Tout, Trader & Trumpet

BUSINESS FOR SALE

Well-run visa run business including tour office at Rawai Beach. Please contact K. Jaochim. Tel: 04-8512378 for more information.

O'MALLEYS IRISH PUB

Small business, big opportunity! Recently refurbished pub & restaurant, located in Phuket City. Package includes all paperwork, visas, 2 work permits and all licenses for a smooth takeover. 400sqm, live music stage, sound and light system, UBC TV, 3 new pool tables (including pool room), 15 tables, 40 bar stools, 5 fridges and freezers, new kitchen equipment and over 300 taxi-bikes with O'Malleys vests driving around the city! Offers considered. Please contact for more information. Tel: 09-7292846. Email: scottshaw77@lycos.co.uk

PRIME WATERFRONT

land. Owner of 4-rai and 2-rai plots with views of Phang Nga Bay seeks development partner (perhaps from project management or construction company) for joint venture and profit share. Contact Email: yes-siam@hotmail.com

INVESTOR/PARTNER

for bar-restaurant wanted. Best venue in Patong. Work permits available. Call 1 pm. - 3 am. Tel: 07-8817600.

RAWAI BAR FOR SALE OR RENT



Fully furnished, cable TV, kitchen, tables. Selling at 350,000 baht, or for rent at 35,000 baht a month. Tel: 01-4777110.

PERSONAL TRAINING

center. Rare opportunity to acquire a successful and prestigious health and fitness center in Chalong. The only dedicated PT center in Phuket, it has established a reputation for quality and professionalism. Superbly equipped, used exclusively by premier expat clients. Tel: 01-0880422. Email: alun@vitagroup.net

GUESTHOUSE

for sale. Guesthouse and restaurant, located opposite the main entrance to the Royal Paradise Hotel, for sale. Six luxury guest rooms with shower, aircon and TV. Beautiful restaurant with kitchen. High standards. 14 million baht. Tel: 01-5385322, 01-8956587. Email: rudolfpanz@hotmail.com

TAILOR SHOP

for immediate sale. 8m x 25m fully furnished, located on Patong road, near Thara Patong Hotel. A 5-year lease. Tel: 09-6656195.

SHOP & EQUIPMENT

for sale. Beauty skincare and slimming center in Krabi Town has closed. We have salon, facial, body slimming and sports equipment, all in very good condition, for sale. Products also for sale. Please contact Erin. Tel: 075-623839, 06-6820069.

INDEPENDENT MANAGER

We are one of the biggest luxury car dealers (Bentley, Bugatti, Ferrari, Hummer, Lamborghini, Mercedes...) in the world and we are looking for someone who can open our office in Thailand. Needs to be fluent in English and Thai. Small investment needed to open office (rent). Salary on provisional basis (5% per sold car). Tel: 0017029857523. For details, visit: www.hotexoticluxurycars.com

COMPANY LTD

(GMBH). Legal construction of limited liability company for sale. 25,000 baht. Entitles you to one work permit and the possibility to own land/house with the company. Tel: 06-2688061. Email: schendl@loxinfo.co.th

BAR AND RESTAURANT

Bar and restaurant for rent at Surin Beach and Patong Beach. Tel: 01-6760125.

BAR/RESTAURANT

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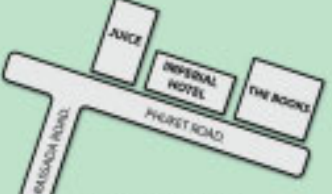
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